

SERMONS

Preach'd on

Various Subjects.

V O L. I.

By *F. B.* *K*

D U B L I N :

Printed by *S. Dowell*, for the use
of the Author, M DCC VIII.

SERMONS

Various Subjects



BY R. R.

DUBLIN

Printed by J. Smith, for the
of the Author, in 1800.

THE PREFACE.

THE following Sermons that were most of 'em Preach'd on Particular Occasions, are now in compliance with the Request of many that heard 'em, Collected into one Volume. They are but as so many Fragments that are here gather'd up, that nothing may be lost. (To allude to VI John 12.) How they may Suit with the Palate of Curious Readers, I am not very Anxious to know, having design'd 'em for the use of such as have a true Relish for the plain and Unadulterated Truth of the Word of God. The most of 'em are of a Practical Strain and Tendency, wholly Calculated for Promoting the uncontested Interest of true

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Piety and Holiness. What little Occurs that is Controversial in 'em (which is chiefly in the 2 First Sermons, and in the Last, and the Appendix to it) I have endeavour'd to Manage with that Clearness and Temper that are the Genuine Characters of the Wisdom that is from above, which is, First Pure, and then Peaceable. For the Papal Supremacy (of which the First Sermon Treats) I take it to be the most Pernicious Engine, both of Dividing the Christian Church, and of Supporting those gross Corruptions in it that are the most indelible Reproach to the Christian Name. So that till that Usurped Power of the Roman Bishops be renounc'd, any effectual Reformation of the Popish Churches, and consequently any such Concord and Coalition with 'em (as some of late plead for) appears to me an Hopeless and Impossible thing. And how little
prospect

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prospect there is of the Popish Clergy's renouncing their Sanguinary Principles and Practices, I have fully shewn in the Second Sermon on **XXIII** Mat. from v. 29 to v. 36. And for the Principles on which some late degenerate Protestants so uncharitably as well as groundlessly, confine the Catholic Church to what they call the Episcopal Communion; They are so manifestly Prejudicial to the Interest of the Reformed Religion, and to the Concord of those Churches that profess it, that I cannot think it unbecoming the Character of a Peace-Maker to expose the weakness of 'em. He that wou'd promote the nearest Union of the Reformed Churches must endeavour to remove these Unscriptural Pretensions, as one of the great Obstacles that lie in the Way of it. For my own part, Plain Uncorrupted Christianity is my Religion. I have a Mental

The Preface.

tal Communion with all Churches
wharver, so far as they profess that.
But I desire to fix my Stated Exter-
nal Communion with such as own
it in its greatest Simplicity and Pu-
rity, and who add thereto the most
Comprehensive and Catholick Charity.
The Kingdom of God is not Meat
and Drink, but Righteousness
and Peace and Joy in the Holy
Ghost. For he that in these things
serveth Christ, is acceptable to
God, and approv'd of Men. XIV
Rom. 17, 18.

the character of a Peace-Maker to
people the world, and to
promote the nearest Union of the
Reformed Churches with each other
these Disciplinary Pre-
conditions, as one of the great Obstacles
to the Union of the West of it. For my own
part, I am Uninterrupted Christ-
ianity in my Religion. I have a Men-
tal

J. B.

A
SERMON

PREACH'D

At DUBLIN

On the 23^d of October, 1705,

BEING

The Anniversary Day of

Thanksgiving

For The

Deliverance of this CITY

From The

Irish Rebellion, 1641.

By J. B.

DUBLIN,

Printed for the use of the Author,

1707.

MONTE
A. J. JAMES

XI-310MB-F-1-M

of this work in the Kingdom



W. J. ...

1870

Printed for the use of the Author.

A Sermon, &c.

XVIII John, Ver. 36.

Jesus answered, My Kingdom is not of this World; if my Kingdom were of this World, then would my Servants fight, that I should not be deliver'd to the Jews: But now is my Kingdom not from hence.

WE are wont to congratulate our manifold *Deliverances from Papal Tyranny* (both those of an *elder*, and those of a *later date*) as the greatest *National Blessings* that the good Providence of God has bestow'd upon us. And we deprecate our Returning under that grievous *Yoke*, as the most insupportable publick *Calamity* that can befall us. But if all this while, the *Roman Bishop* be indeed (as he pretends) the *Vicar of Christ, The Head of the Catholick*

410 d 24357 100 WEEDING OF THE OLDEN
A Sermon Preach'd on the
tholick Church, and the necessary Centre of
Unity to it; so that none are capable of
Salvation but such as live in *subjection* to
him, and *Communion* with him; Then
indeed, what we are wont to celebrate
as glorious *Deliverances*, are no better
than publick *Judgments*; and that *Sub-
jection to the Roman Yoke*, which we esteem
as so formidable an *Evil*, wou'd be the
most desirable *Blessing*. And tho' me-
thods of violence are very cross to the
grain of human Nature. yet we might
be almost tempted to forgive our Ene-
mies for using some *rigour* and *severity*,
when it was only to reduce us into the
bosom of the Catholick Church, and to com-
pel us to come into the *Fold of Christ*.

I shall therefore at present Examine
these specious Pretensions of the *Roman
Popes*, who so confidently assume to them-
selves a *Supremacy* over the whole Chri-
stian Church, as delegated to 'em from
J. Christ the undoubted *Head* and *King*
of it; and who make the acknowledg-
ment of this their Universal Sovereignty
a necessary *Article of the Christian Faith*,
without which no man can be sav'd. For
if their *Empire* be indeed the *Kingdom of
Christ*, which he administers by them as
his *Vicars* and *Delegates*, Then 'tis a dam-
nable

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nable Sin to withdraw our Necks from under their Sacred Yoke. But if they have no such *Supremacy* delegated to 'em from our B. Saviour, If their *Kingdom* and *Empire* have none of the *Essential Characters* that belong to his, but rather the quite opposite ones, that carry the most open contrariety to it; Then we may justly regard their pretended *Supremacy* as a most unjust and wicked *Usurpation*, and ought to esteem our freedom from their Usurped Domination as an eminent *National Blessing*, which we are bound to adore the Divine Goodness for preserving to us hitherto, and to beg of him the continuance of.

Now to put this Debate to a short issue, I shall not Examine all the *Arguments* which those of the *Romish Church* produce to prove, That our B. Saviour delegated this Universal *Supremacy* over his *Church* to St. Peter; Nor shall I take pains to refute those *Shadows* rather than *Reasons* which they alledge to persuade us, That St. Peter made over this *Supremacy* to all the *Bishops* of *Rome*, who shou'd succeed him in that his pretended *See* or *Chair*. (This I have at large formerly done). But I shall fix on this one *Character* that our Saviour gives in my Text of his

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his Kingdom; and shall from thence demonstrate to you, That the *Papal Empire* can never be the *Kingdom of Christ*, since it apparently bears a character diametrically opposite to this. And this is a Dispute that is to be determin'd, not by nice and intricate *Speculations*, but by plain *matter of Fact*, obvious to the view of all that will impartially consider it.

The Occasion of the Words was this.

Jesus being brought by the Jews before Pilate the Roman Governor, under the character of a *Malefactor*, Pilate puts this Question to him, *Art thou the King of the Jews?*

No doubt he had heard of the pretensions of Jesus of Nazareth to be the *Christ* or promised *Messiah*, whom the Jewish Nation had so long expected, under this character of the *King of Israel*, who was to sit on the *Throne of David*; Who shou'd reign over the *House of Jacob* for ever, and of whose *Kingdom* there shou'd be no End. See 1 John 49. 1 Luke 32, 33. And that occasions his putting this Question to him, as supposing that such pretensions might be dangerous to *Cesar's Authority*, and therefore just ground of his proceeding against him. Our Lord instead

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instead of directly answering the Question proposes another to him, *Sayst thou this of thy self or did others tell it thee of me?* q'd. Dost thou put this question to me from any thing thou hast found in my conduct tending to disturb the publick Peace, or to subvert Cesar's Authority which thou art solicitous to maintain? Or dost thou make this Enquiry only at the suggestion of others who charge me with assuming this Title? Upon this *Pilate* replies, *Am I a Jew?* *Thy own Nation, and the chief Priests have deliver'd thee unto me, What hast thou done?* q'd. 'Tis not I but thy own Nation, and the Rulers thereof that are thy *Accusers*. And what hast thou done to occasion this charge they bring against thee of assuming the Title of their *King*?

To this our Lord answers in the words of my Text, *My Kingdom is not of this World, &c.* q'd. 'Tis true indeed, That Title of *King of Israel* do's belong to me. And I came to set up that Kingdom of *David* which the Prophets have so long foretold. But 'tis not a *Temporal* and *Earthly*, but a *spiritual and heavenly Kingdom*, I came to Erect. A Kingdom that do's not interfere with, nor can prejudice

the Interests of *Earthly Princes*. A *Kingdom* that is not to be propagated by *force of Arms*, and advanc'd by the *violence of bloody Wars*. Had I pretended to such a *Kingdom*, I wou'd have endeavour'd to gather about me *armed Followers*, that might have drawn their swords in my defence, and prevented my being deliver'd up into the hands of my known malicious Enemies. So that thou may'st plainly see, *That my Kingdom is not from hence*. 'Tis neither in it's *Rise*, in it's *Constitution* or *Administration*, in it's *manner of propagation*, or in it's *tendency and design* like the *Kingdoms of this World*, that occasion such warm and fierce contest among those that are *Pretenders* to 'em. 'Tis a *Kingdom* that *Earthly Princes* have no just ground to envy, and which 'tis no way their Interest to oppose.

You see then the character that our *B. Saviour* gives of his *Kingdom*, viz. *That 'tis not of this World*.

In speaking thereto, I shall suggest several *Particulars* that will at once both *illustrate and prove*, *That this is a just Character of Christ's Kingdom, That 'tis not of this World*.

I. This *Kingdom of Christ* is *not of this World*, in respect of it's *Rise and Original*.

Earthly

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Earthly Princes claim their Crowns as either descended to 'em by an hereditary Right, or bestow'd by the free consent of willing Nations, or as acquir'd by conquest, &c. But our B Saviour claims his Kingdom as the immediate Gift of the Father, by whom all power in Heaven and Earth is committed to him, and he is constituted Head of his Church, and Head over all things to it. Earthly Magistracy is with respect to it's immediate Original, an human Ordinance; and only Mediatly from God, the fountain of all Power. But the Son of God owes his universal Empire to the immediate Donation of the Father, who has set him as King on his holy Hill of Sion, and given him the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for his Possession. See 28 Matth. 18. 1 Eph. 22, &c. 2 Ps. 6, 8.

II. Again, The Kingdom of Christ is not of this World in respect of it's Constitution.

The Laws of it are spiritual and heavenly, such as not only regulate Men's External behaviour, but their inward Thoughts and Purposes, Desires and Intentions, Inclinations and Affections. They are chiefly calculated for promoting the glory of God, by moulding our Wills to

a conformity to his, For the *Ennobling* and *perfecting* our *reasonable Nature*, For laying the *foundation* of our *inward Peace* and our *Everlasting Happiness*.

The *Rewards* of this Kingdom are also *Spiritual* and *Heavenly*.

Our *B. Saviour* no where proposes to his faithful Followers *Earthly Honours* and *Dignitys* as the *Recompence* of their *Fidelity* and *Service*. He do's indeed set before 'em a noble Object of their ambition; But 'tis the *Glorys* of the *invisible World*, that are yet to be reveal'd. He promises 'em *Crowns* and *Thrones*; But 'tis an *unfading Crown* of *Righteousness* and *Life*; 'Tis an *heavenly Throne*, to which they are not to be *advanc'd* till their *warfare* on *Earth* is *Ended*. But as for this *World*, he rather gives 'em the prospect of the *Cross* as the way to the *Crown*; and of *Sufferings* as the ordinary road to *Glory*. Nor do's he any where invite Men into his *Kingdom* by the Promise of *temporal Riches*. He himself was so far from amassing vast *Treasures* on *Earth*, that he tells us, *The Foxes had holes, and the Birds of the Air had Nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head*. & *Matth. 20*. He sent his *Apostles* without *gold, or silver, or Ruffs* in their purses, and the

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tho' he tells 'em, *That the Labourer was worthy of his hire*, yet he no where Encourages 'em to expect great Earthly Revenues and Estates as the fruit of their painful Labours. He do's indeed promise to 'em valuable Treasures, but they are incorruptible ones; and a rich Inheritance, but 'tis an Inheritance in Reversion, not to be enjoy'd on this Earth, but lay'd up for 'em in the highest Heavens.

And for the Qualities and characters that recommend men as his acceptable subjects to the Rewards of his Kingdom, they are very different from those that are usually found in such as are Attendants and Ministers in Earthly Courts.

'Tis an Ambitious and Aspiring Genius that usually paves men's way to Preferments in the Kingdom of this World. But nothing is a more insuperable Obstacle and Barr to the Glory of his Kingdom, than such an eager desire of secular Greatness and Dominion. As we may see in that severe Rebuke that our B. Saviour gave his Disciples when they so warmly disputed, *Who should be greatest among* 'em. To dash all such ambitious Pretensions out of countenance, he sets a little child before 'em, as an Emblem of Humility, and tells 'em, *That those who*
most

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most resembled such a little Babe in lowliness of Mind, and alienation from all worldly Pride, shou'd be greatest in his Kingdom. See 18 *Matth*, 1, 2, &c. 9 *Mark* 33. 9 *Luke*, 46, &c.

The Ministers in Earthly Courts must be vers'd in all the methods of refined Policy, In all the subtle Arts of Dissimulation and Flattery; and 'tis such secular Prudence, or rather Craft, that ordinarily recommends 'em to publick Employments and Stations. But in the Kingdom of Christ, 'Tis simplicity and godly sincerity in opposition to this fleshly Wisdom that must enable us to approve our selves to his Eye.

Those that attend Earthly Courts, usually do it with a design to enrich themselves, To make a Fortune, and raise their Familys; and therefore make their Inclinations and conduct on all occasions to bend and truckle to their Wordly Interest. But to render a man an acceptable subject of the Kingdom of Christ, 'Tis requisite that he shou'd be crucify'd to the World, and the World to him. The Glory and Service of his blessed Master must be his highest Interest, which no worldly Interest must stand in competition with. Mammon must be no competitor with God,

6 *Matth*.

from

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6 *Matth. 24.* *Earthly Riches* are neither to be eagerly coveted (since by exposing us to manifold Temptations, they render our Salvation the more difficult). Nor when obtain'd, are they to be *hoarded up*, but *laid out* in our Master's service.

Again;

III. *The Kingdom of Christ is not of this World*, as to the manner of it's Administration.

As will appear if we consider the following Particulars.

We see nothing in it of the visible *Pomp and Splendor of Earthly Kingdoms*.

The Incarnate Son of God, when he was on this Earth, appear'd in *the form of a Servant*, and not of an *Earthly Sovereign*. He had no *Palace to inhabit*; No *Capital City* for the *Seat of his Empire*; No *Guards* for his *defence*; No *Court*, no *Retinue*, no *Equipage*, none of the usual *resplendent Marks of human Grandure and Authority*. And that unconceivable *Glory* with which he is now invested in the highest Heavens, is to us invisible. Accordingly our Lord tells those *Pharisees* that enquir'd, *when the Kingdom of God would come*, That it comes not with *observation* (or outward shew), that they might say, *Lo here, or Lo there*; For (saith he)

The

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The Kingdom of God is within you, 17 Luke
20, 21.

Again; This Kingdom is not manag'd
by that coercive Power that Secular Princes
make use of.

Those Apostles to whom he committed
the highest Authority in his Church,
were to govern it *by the Word*, and not
by the Sword. The authority he delegat-
ed to 'em was to be exercis'd not on *the*
Bodys but on *the Souls* of Men. And even
with respect to the *Consciences* of Men;
They were not constituted *Lords over*
God's Heritage, nor were to usurp a *domi-*
nion over their Faith, having only a com-
mission to deliver to his Church the
Doctrine Christ had reveal'd, and the *Com-*
mands that he had given: They had no
power either to impose any new *Articles*,
or any new *Laws* of their own on the
Faith or *Practice* of the *Universal Church*.
They were to deliver to 'em what they had
receiv'd of the Lord, 1 Cor. 11. 23. So
that their Office was rather a *Ministry*
than properly a *Government*. And in the
Exercise thereof we often read indeed of
their *Exhorting*, their *Persuading*, their *Be-*
seeching and *Intreating* those whom they
address'd themselves to; But no where
of their *Magisterial Commands*, and of their
Enjoyn-

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Enjoying this or that of their own mere will and pleasure, with severe anathema's against all that shou'd dispute their Sovereign Mandates. Such an imperious Dictatorship as this our Lord expressly forbade 'em to use. For when the two Disciples requested that they might sit the one at his right hand, and the other at his left in his Kingdom, he checks their ambitious Pretensions; To know (saith he 20 Matth. 25, 26, 27.) that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise Dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority over 'em: But it shall not be so among you. But whoever will be great among you, let him be your Minister: And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. 'Tis not Tyranny in the Exercise of Civil Government that our Lord there forbids, (For he speaks of such Princes as were Benefactors, and all Heathen Rulers were not Tyrants, See 22 Luke 25, &c.) But all coercive Power of the Sword, nay all Arbitrary Dictatorship in the management of their spiritual Authority; their Office being (as I suggested) rather a Service and Ministry, than a Sovereignty and Domination.

Again, The kingdom of Christ do's not intermeddle with men's worldly Affairs
and

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and *Interests*; and he never design'd to erect a *Tribunal* for the decision of *secular Causes*. So much we may justly infer from our Lord's Rejecting the Request of him that desir'd him to *speak to his Brother to divide his Inheritance with him*, with such marks of his just dislike of it; *Man, who (saith he) made me a Ruler and Judge over you?* 12 *Luke 14.*

Again, *This kingdom of Christ* is not to be propagated and enlarg'd, as the *Kingdoms of this World*, by force of Arms.

The *Apostles* who were sent to advance it in the *World*, tell us, That the *Weapons of their Warfare* were not carnal but *spiritual*, design'd to batter down no other *strong-holds* but those of *sin*. They were sent to *captivate Men to the obedience of Faith* with the *Armour of Light*, by *Arguments*, and *Persuasions*, and *Intreatys* proper to *convince their Understandings*, and *gain their Hearts*. They were to *draw men to our B. Saviour with the Cords of a Man*, and with the *Bands of Love*. They were to use no other *Compulsion* to bring men into his *Kingdom*, than serious *Importunity* in their *solicitations*. *Violence and Rigour, Cruel Torments and Barbarous Usage*, were none of the *Methods* that he recommended or al-

low'd

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low'd for the *Conversion* of *Infidels* themselves. Nay our B. Lord esteems none as his subjects that are not his *Willing People*, 110 Pl. 3. He abominates that *External Profession* of his Religion that is *extorted* by *Terrors* from the *Tongues* of Men, contrary to the *inward persuasion* of their *Minds* and *bent* of their *Hearts*.

Once more, His *Kingdom* is not to be *administred* according to the *common* (but generally corrupt) *Maxims* of *human Policy*.

There is no use of *Disimulation* and *Fraud*, of *subtilty* and *Craft* in the management of the spiritual affairs of it. Besides *Worldly Interest* is not here the *Governing Principle*. And therefore there is no occasion of varying our *conduct* in pursuing the concerns of this Kingdom according to the different *Aspects* of *secular advantage* and *Gain*.

And to add no more ;

IV. The great *Design* of this Kingdom is not so much to promote the *temporal Prosperity* of *Kingdoms* and *States*, (tho' a strict observation of it's Laws wou'd have an admirable tendency this way) as to advance the *Glory of God* in the *salvation of souls*. It's great End is to set up *God's Empire* and *Throne* in the *Hearts*

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of

of Men, and to prepare 'em by a due proficiency in divine *Wisdom and Knowledge*, in *Grace and Holiness* here, for the *perfection and blessedness* of the *Heavenly Kingdom*. And all it's affairs are to be manag'd with a steady regard to this great Design, which secular Princes rarely have in their View; Nor is their coercive Power so directly adapted to promote it.

And thus I have given you such a short view of the *Kingdom of Christ* as sufficiently demonstrates, *That 'tis not of this World*, being vastly different from the *Kingdoms thereof* in respect of it's divine *Original*, it's *heavenly Constitution*, It's *Spiritual manner of Administration*, and it's glorious *design and Aim*.

I now proceed to Examine the confident Pretensions of the *Bishops of Rome* to be the *Vicars of Christ*, to whom he has entrusted the *Administration of this Kingdom* of his.

To that purpose they tell us, "That
 "as our B. Saviour before he left this
 "Earth delegated his supreme Autho-
 "rity to *St. Peter the Prince of the Apo-*
 "sles; So *St. Peter* by fixing his See at
 "Rome and dying there bequeath'd this
 "Supremacy to his Successors in that chair
 to

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“to the End of the World. And there-
“fore the *Roman Bishop* is the *Head* of
“the *Catholick Church*, That his *Empire*
“is the same with that of *Christ*, whose
“*Lieutenant* and *Delegate* he is. And
“that subjection to him is not only *due*
“from all the *Christian World*, but so
“necessary that *there is no salvation to be*
“*had without it*. He being the *Centre* of
“*Unity* to the *Christian Church*, all are
“*excluded out of the Pale* of it, that are
“not in *communion* with him.

This *Doctrine* (as strange and mon-
strous as it may seem to us) is no *dispu-*
table Opinion in the *Church of Rome*, but
one of the *Essential Articles* of their
Trent-Creed, without the belief whereof
they tell us, *That no Man can be sav'd*.
And accordingly in their publick *Profes-*
sion of Faith, are these remarkable Words,
“*I acknowledge the holy Catholick and Apo-*
“*stolick Roman Church to be the Mother*
“*and Mistress of all Churches, and I pro-*
“*mise and swear true obedience to the Ro-*
“*man Pope, successor of blessed Peter the*
“*Prince of the Apostles and the Vicar of*
“*Jesus Christ*.

I shall not at present take notice, How
entire a stranger the *Apostle Peter* him-
self was to any such *Supremacy* over the

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rest of the Apostles, and over the *Universal Church*, as *Christ* is by them suppos'd to have delegated to him; Nor shall I observe, How little the *Bishops of Rome* for several successive Ages ever dream'd of any such vast *Legacy* left 'em by *St. Peter*, or ever lay'd claim to such an *Universal Empire* over the whole Christian Church, tho' there are a thousand invincible Arguments to be offer'd against these vain and chimerical Pretensions. (See *Dr. Barrow's Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy.*)

I shall only confine my self to this one obvious and clear *character* in my Text.

If the *Pope's Empire* be the *Kingdom of Christ*, Then 'tis not a *Kingdom of this World*. If therefore it appear on the contrary to be a *Temporal Kingdom*, in it's *Original*, it's *Constitution*, it's *manner of Administration*, and in it's *Design* every way conformable to the *Kingdoms of this World*, but most dissonant from the nature and genius of this *Spiritual Kingdom of Christ*, Then 'tis manifest, That 'tis none of his; and that this *Monarchy* over the Church which the Roman Bishops arrogate to themselves is a most vile and daring *Usurpation of the Throne of Christ*, and may more justly be denominated
the

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the Empire of Antichrist, than the Kingdom of Christ.

Now to make good this Charge against *the Papal Kingdom*, Let us First take a *general View* of it, and then more *distinctly* consider it's *Original*, It's *Constitution*, It's *Administration* and *design*.

First, Let us take a *general View* of this *Papal Kingdom* or *Empire*.

For our Saviour's Kingdom, himself tells us, *it comes not with any observable Pomp or shew*, For 'tis a *Kingdom* set up in the *Consciences* and *Souls* of *Men*, xvii Luke 20.

But if we look on this *Papal Empire*, We find in it on the contrary, all the observable *Magnificence* and *Pomp* of *Earthly Kingdoms*.

This pretended *Monarch* of the *Christian World* has an *Earthly City* for the *capital seat* of his *Empire*. Even that celebrated one of *Rome* which *St. John* describ'd in his *Time* as *that great City* that reign'd over the *Kings* of the *Earth*, 17 Rev. ult. and which he describes under the character of *Babylon the great*, the *Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth*, v. 5. And as *Rome's* being the *Imperial City* while that famous *Empire* stood, first gave the *Bishops* of that *City*

the most considerable *Rank* and *Station* in the Christian World ; so their *Successors* have fairly improv'd the advantage upon the Removal of the seat of the Empire to the *East*, to fix here the seat of a new *Empire*, which (as their *Historians* are wont themselves to boast) has *reviv'd* the ancient *Majesty* and *glory* of the *Roman Empire* under another *Name* and *Form*, but not *unlike* to that it had before.

In this *Capital City* this *Sovereign Pontiff* and *Monarch* has his residence ; From hence he issues his *Mandates* and *Decrees*. Here he dwells in a stately *Palace* that yields to very few on Earth in the *magnificence* of the *Building* without, or *costliness* of the *Movables* and *Furniture* within. Here he keeps a splendid *Court* and *Retinue*, no way inferior to that of *Secular Princes*. Nay here he has a *Senate* (bearing some resemblance to that of ancient *Rome*) I mean the *Colledge of Cardinals*, who in their *Creation* are styl'd, *Senators of the Imperial City*, *Equal to Kings*, and the *true Hinges on which the World is to turn*. Here he has a large *Territory* round his *Capital City*, which is as entirely subject to his *Authority*, as the *Kingdoms* of any *Secular Princes* are

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to theirs, under the Notion of the Church-
es Demeans or St. Peter's Patrimony. But
this is but a small part of his Dominions.
For he claims all Christian Countrys as so
many Provinces of his vast Empire. Here
he pretends to Establish Subordinate Go-
vernors, such as Primates, Metropolitans,
Arch Bishops, and Bishops, who as they
are to derive their Authority from him,
so they are accountable to him for their Ad-
ministration. And to manifest his Supre-
macy over 'em, They are oblig'd at their
Intallation to take an Oath of Fealty and
Allegiance to St. Peter, To the Holy Ro-
man Church, and to our Lord the Pope, and
to his Successors that shall be canonically e-
lected. And the Papal Dignity and the Roy-
altys of St. Peter they promise to defend
against all Persons whatsoever, (not except-
ing their own Princes.) And these Dig-
nitys the Roman Pontiff invests 'em in (as
Princes are wont to do) by some Exter-
nal mark or gift, as a Cross, a Ring, or a
Pallium.

But Temporal Princes themselves must
not plead Exemption from this Sovereign
Authority of Christ's pretended Vicar.
For the Roman Popes have for several
Successive Ages claim'd a Sovereign
Power over Princes themselves, to set

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'em up or depose 'em at their pleasure. And no wonder, When in their account, Those Princes do as truly derive their Authority from the Pope as the Moon borrows her Light from the Sun. When Emperors or Kings are but (as Pope Innocent the 3^d, somewhat unmannerly terms 'em) the Dogs which the Pope the Universal Shepherd employs to guard this or that part of his Flock; And whom therefore (as the Jesuit Becan well observes) the Supreme Pastor may Drive away and turn out of Office when they grow negligent and careless. Nor is this pretended Dominion over Secular Princes a bare empty Title. For the Roman Popes in the Exercise of it have claim'd real marks of homage and subjection from 'em. We find in the Roman Pontifical this Form of an Oath that the King of the Romans was to take before he receiv'd the Imperial Crown from the Pope, " I King of the Romans, and under
" the good pleasure of God about to be Empe-
" ror, do of my own free will swear to God,
" and St. Peter, that I will be henceforth
" Protector and Defender of the Sovereign
" Pontiff and of the H. Roman Church in
" all her occasions and Interests, guarding
" her Rights and Priviledges as far as I
" can by God's help, according to my best
skill

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"skill and power with a pure and upright
"fidelity, So help me God.

And whereas Sovereign Princes on Earth have Lords under 'em that are their *Vassals*, holding Lands from 'em by way of *fealty* and *homage*; so have the *Roman Pontiffs* from time to time lay'd claim to most of the *Kingdoms* of *Europe* as *feudatory* to the *Church*, pretending that they held 'em as *Fiefs* from *St. Peter* and his *Successors*. Such a Claim *Gregory the 7th* lay'd to *Spain*, *Alexander the 3d* to *Portugal*, *Innocent the 3d* to *England*, *Boniface the 8th* to *Scotland*, *Gregory the 7th* to *Hungary*, *Benedict the 9th* to *Poland*, *Alexander the 2d* to *Denmark*, &c. And it was in vertue of these confident Claims that the *Roman Pontiffs* for so many Ages receiv'd such vast *Tributes* from the several *Countrys* of *Europe*, as a substantial acknowledgement of his authority over 'em. (Of which more anon.)

And to all other Marks of *Temporal Empire* we may add those *Tribunals* which the *Roman Bishops* created in all those *Kingdoms* where their authority was own'd, call'd *Spiritual Courts*, but in which under one frivolous pretence or other a vast Number of *Civil Causes* was brought

brought under their cognizance; to the great Diminution of the *Civil Power*; The *Papal Canons* are the *Laws* they are bound to observe; But all their Proceedings are subject to the superior authority of the *Court of Rome*, to which all *appeals* are to be made, and to which the most important and profitable *Causes* were still reserved.

And sure when we see such a *Monarch* as this, seated in his *Imperial City*, thence issuing his *Laws* under the Title of *Decrees, Canons, Bulls, &c.* Extending his power over so many *Provinces*, Receiving from his Subjects both *Ecclesiastick* and *Secular Rulers* such *Oaths of Fealty*, and such considerable *Tributes* as an acknowledgement of their *dependance and subjection*, When we see him making *Alliances and Treatys* with neighbouring *Princes*, and view his *Court* crouded with the *Embassadors* of *Princes* from the several parts of *Europe*, We can see little in such an *Empire* as this of that Character our Saviour gives of his *Kingdom*, *That 'tis not of this World*. For there is all imaginable *Conformity* in this to the *Kingdoms of this World*. Here is all the *Magnificence and Pomp* that can belong to em.

But

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But 2^{dly}, to sett this important Truth in a yet clearer Light, Let us proceed to take a more particular View of this *Papal Empire*, In it's *Original*, In it's *Constitution*, In it's *manner of Administration*, In it's *design*, And we shall in all these particulars find all the marks of an *Earthly* instead of a *Spiritual kingdom*.

I. Let us view this *Papal Empire* in it's *Original and Rise*.

And I am sure this is far from being *Divine*.

If our B. Saviour delegated this vast Empire to *St. Peter*, we are sure whatever right he might have to it, he never got the *Possession* of it. And we are as sure that the *Roman Bishops* for several *Centurys* never once put in their *Claim* for it. Had they put in any such *Claim*, There had been no occasion for *Leo* the 9th in the 11th *Century*, and his *Successors* to support their *pretensions* with an imaginary *Donation of Constantine* the Great to *Pope Sylvester*, in which 'tis pretended that that *Emperor* upon his removing his Seat to *Byzantium* (afterwards call'd *Constantinople*) left *Rome* it self, and all the *Western part of the Empire* to *Pope Sylvester* and his *Successors*. 'Tis true indeed, this pretended *Donation* is now run down by them-

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themselves as a counterfeit piece, and particularly by their great *Annalist Baronius*; And 'tis not unpleasant to hear the Reason he gives for it. He owns indeed that the *Pope* has such a *Sovereignty* not only over *Italy* but over all the *Western Empire*, But it's false (saith he) that this was given him either by *Constantine*, or by any other; For it comes immediately from *Christ*, by whose Order the *Emperor* is oblig'd to receive his *Crown* from the *Pope*, to own himself his *Vassal*, to pay him fealty and homage, and to hold his bridle and stirrup, *Happy Historian* indeed, that has discover'd the Mistakes that so many former *Popes* had run into, who for want of understanding the extent of their power, claim'd that from the liberality of *Emperors* and *Princes*, which belong'd to 'em by the immediate Gift of *Christ* himself. But that voluminous *Annalist* must put out our Eyes before he can persuade us to disbelieve what *History* do's so manifestly shew, viz. That the *Papal Power* and *Empire* has from time to time, ow'd the vast *Advances* and *progress* it has made in the world, partly to the liberal *Concessions* of bigotted and superstitious *Princes*, partly to the violent *Incroachments* of the *Popes* themselves on those *Princes* that

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that were too weak to resist and oppose their ambitious designs; and partly to thole *numberless Artifices and Tricks* that they us'd to wheedle Princes out of their just rights, and to raise their *own Authority* on the diminution of their's. And indeed the *Conflicts* of the *Popes* for several Ages with *Secular Princes*, who complain'd of their *Usurpations* and *Incroachments* on the *Civil Power*, but were usually born down with the Torrent of the *Papal*, make up a great part of the *History of Christendom* for several Ages. A plain demonstration, That the Rise of this Empire was *human* and not *divine*, from *Earth*, and not from *Heaven*.

II. Let us go on to view the *Constitution* of this *Papal Empire*.

And here I might at large shew how entirely different the *Laws* of this *Papal Empire* are from the *Laws* of *Christ*, and in how *numberless* Instances repugnant to 'em. But to enlarge on that, wou'd require a *Volume* rather than a *Sermon*.

I might also shew, How this pretended *Monarch* allures Men to subject themselves to his Empire, and to combine for the defence and support of it, not by *Motives* drawn from the *other World*, but by those *Preferments* and *Dignitys*, which carry

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carry with 'em an affluence of secular honour and wealth, and are a fit Lure only for men of worldly Minds.

But what I shall chiefly insist on under this Head, is to shew, That the *Spirit* that visibly reigns in this *Papal Empire* is most opposite to the *Qualitys* and *Characters* of those that our *B. Saviour* will own as the acceptable *Subjects* of his *Kingdom*.

1. You have already heard, That 'tis *Humility* that will render a Man *greatest in the Kingdom of Christ*. Sure then we might expect to find something of it in his pretended *Vicars*, if the *Roman Bishops* were really *such*. But we may boldly challenge the World to produce us such a sett of *Monsters of Pride* as have for several Ages possess'd the *Papal Empire*. Methinks when I read their *Decrees* and their *Bulls*, There is at first view a strange difference between the Language of *St. Peter* and that of his *Successors*. To hear the One *exhort* and *advise*, *intreat* and *beseech* with all the lowliness that became a disciple of his blessed Master; while the others talk in the most *imperious strain* that the proudest *Monarchs* ever us'd, will easily convince us, that whatever *Power St. Peter* bequeath'd to 'em, he left

'em

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'em none of his amiable Vertues of *Humility and Modesty*.

'Tis true indeed, their *Mandates* are often prefac'd with that hypocritical Title of *Servant of the Servants of God*. But if the *Roman Pontiff* begin in the Style of a *Lamb*, he goes on with that of a *Dragon*. This pretended *Servant* soon acts the part of a *Sovereign Dictator and Master*, absolutely requiring a *blind obedience* to all his *Injunctions*, and denouncing rash *Anathemas* and *Curses* against all that dare oppose his *Pleasure and Will*.

But 'tis no wonder that he shou'd speak to the rest of mankind in such an imperious strain, when he treats *Sovereign Princes* themselves with so little of respect, and makes even those *Earthly Gods* pay him all the marks of *Vassalage* and *Subjection*. Methinks when on the one hand I see *Peter* so modestly but earnestly refusing that excess of civil respect paid him by *Cornelius* when he fell down at his feet, 10 *Acts* 25, 26. And on the other, When I see the *Roman Bishops* obliging *Princes* themselves to *kiss their Toe*, nay to *surrender their Crowns* to 'em, When I behold 'em riding in pomp while *Emperors* hold their stirrup, and *Kings* walk on foot before

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*before 'em, When I see 'em trampling on the
Necks of Emperors, and dashing off their
Crownes with their feet, nay forcing 'em
upon pretence of some offence given to
make barefoot at their gates for Absolution,
and to add no more, not only Threat-
ning to tread Princes under their feet, but
actually deposing 'em at their pleasure, and
shedding Torrents of blood to execute their
sentence, I cannot but discern in the one the
genuine spirit of the lowly Jesus, but in
the other the detestable Image of Lucifer
himself, and the lively character of that
Man of sin that sitting in the Temple of God
exalts himself above all that is called God
or worshipped, (i. e. as Expositors very just-
ly interpret it, Above all earthly Magi-
strates to whom the Title of Gods is some-
times given in Scripture). 2. Thess. 2.*

But no wonder that those shou'd
proudly trample Princes under their feet,
whose daring Arrogance runs so high as
to assume not only the Titles but the in-
communicable Rights of the B. God. It
were needless to mention, How often the
Roman Bishops have had the appellation
of Gods given 'em by their vile Flatter-
ers, and that on the most solemn and pub-
lick Occasions. Nor can we reasonably
excuse that Title of his Holiness, and of
our

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our most holy Lord the Pope, from blasphemy, which yet is the common style us'd at Rome by all that address themselves unto him. Nor can I view that scandalous Action of the Pope's being after his *Election Seated on the Altar* (the Residence and Seat of their pretended God, I mean the *Host*) and there receiving that *Homage* of the Cardinals which they call *Adoration*, without discerning herein the characters of him that tempted our Saviour himself to *fall down and worship him*. But what then shall we think of that unsupportable Instance of *Pride*, I mean the *Power* which the *Roman Popes* claim to *dispense with the Laws of God*; as if their authority were superior to his, And they had a right, to controll his *Commands*. And yet 'tis notorious, That the *Roman Bishops* carry their Pretensions thus high, and do in various Cases presume by their authority to *license and allow those Crimes* which the Law of God has most strictly forbid, even such as *Incest, The breach of solemn Oaths and Vows, &c.* And if this be not a daring affront to the authority of God, 'Tis hard to say what is. But thus they make good their Pretensions, " *That all Laws human and divine are lodg'd in the*
C Pope's

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1st Page of Isaiah. *This it belongs to him to judge all, but to be judge by none.* And if any think that such Language and such Actions as these favour or match ad like Humility, which our Lord recommends, It will scarce be possible for him to tell us what Arrogance and Pride is.

2nd Another Character and Quality of the Subjects of Christ's Kingdom, is Sincerity and Simplicity. But how entirely the Spirit of worldly and corrupt Policy reigns in the Papal Empire, I shall have occasion to suggest when I come to consider the Administration of the Papal Kingdom.

3rd Another Character and Quality of the Subjects of Christ's Kingdom, is a Father terrified to this world, and all the low Interests thereof; and if the Roman Bishops were indeed the Vicars of Christ, We might expect to find something of this heavenly Disposition in 'em.

But since if ever the Spirit of the World took possession of any, it has remarkably seiz'd on these pretended Successors of St. Peter. Sordid and insatiable Avarice has so notoriously reign'd in this Papal Empire, as if Mammon were the only God that were here ador'd. I have on former occasions shown, How entirely the Papal Religion as such is accommodated

ted to serve a worldly Interest. For what
 end is the Credit of a Purgatory Fire kept
 up but to enhance the Sale of Masses
 and Indulgences? Nay even the *Monks* of
Monastery Poverty are but a specious pre-
 tence and Hook to enrich the *Mon-
 asterys* and *Convents*. What is the great
 use of *Indulgences* but to enrich the *Priests*
 by the numerous Offerings of a blind and
superstitious People? But I shall at present
 confine my self to the See and Court of
 Rome the Source of this horrible Cor-
 ruption. Some that pretend to nice com-
 putations reckon that in Popish Coun-
 trys, The Clergy who are scarce above
 the hundredth part of 'em, do yet enjoy a
 third of the Lands. But however that be,
 We are sure that as the *Roman Bishops*
 pretend to so vast an Empire, so they
 have left no stone unturn'd, no scanda-
 lous Arts untry'd to heap up a fucible
 Fund to support it. Sometimes they
 wou'd solicit the Liberality of supersti-
 tious Princes, and put 'em upon expia-
 ting their Crimes by their Beneficence to
 the *Italy See*. Sometimes they wou'd on
 pretence of some Affronts offer'd to their
 authority, interdict whole Kingdoms, and
 oblige 'em to buy off the Censure by pay-
 ing some annual Tribute to St. Peter.

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Sometimes on pretence of sending a *Bishop* or *Monk* to convert some *Pagan Country*, they claim'd it as a *Fief* of the *Holy See*, and demanded a considerable Sum under the Notion of *Peter-pence*. And indeed, As the *Roman Bishops* some ages ago had found one *Artifice* or other to render most *Nations in Europe* Tributary to 'em, so 'tis not imaginable what prodigious Sums, were pay'd by 'em for the support of the *Papal Grandure*. If we may judge of other Kingdoms by what *Historians* tell us of our own, The *Roman See* must be rich indeed that so miserably drain'd and pill'd 'em all. For our own, They tell us, That the Sums sent yearly to *Rome* from hence exceeded the *Revenue* allotted to our *Princes*. For besides the *Peter-pence* pay'd by all, and the vast Sums squeez'd by the disposal and Sale of *Benefices* (of which more anon) That one Tribute of *Annates* and *first fruits* came in a few years to 16000 l. a great Sum in those days, and yet but a small part of the *Pope's Revenue* here. What an immense Treasure then must the *Tribute* of all the other Kingdoms of *Europe* amount to?

But the *Avarice* of the *Roman Bishops* was too insatiable a *Gulf* to be thus easily

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fly fill'd. And therefore they have found out that constant and never-failing spring of wealth, *the scandalous Sale* of all that is accounted *sacred* among 'em. And to such a degree of shameless Traffick was *the Court of Rome* come, as to set up a *Chancery* in which all manner of Crimes even the most odious and detestable were *set to sale* at a certain price. And a man might at a very moderate rate purchase an *Absolution* for Incest or Buggery, For adultery or murder, For killing his Parents, or lying with his Sisters. Nay tho' some of these abuses are retrench'd, and that open scandalous Sale of Indulgences that occasion'd the Reformation is in some degree forborn; and tho' upon the Reformation several of those springs are dam'd up that once emptied their streams of wealth into the *Tyber*; yet the *Roman Bishops* want not means to enrich their coffers, by turning the *Temple of God* into an *House of Merchandize*. For besides what the Pope holds in *Italy* under the Notion of *St. Peter's Patrimony*, Besides all the considerable Lands he has in *Cologne, Leige, Mentz, Triers*, and several *Bishopricks* in *Germany*, How vast a yearly Revenue do's accrue to him, from the *Investiture of Bishops*, from the Sale of Be-

nefices,

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usages, From Abolutions, Commendams, Re-
formations, Expectatives, Provisions, Re-
signations, Reservations, Translations, E-
rections, Substitutions, and Dispensations of
Innumerable Sorts, and above all the Sale
of Indulgences, which are still in vogue
at Rome, and may be obtain'd there by
any, that will purchase manus adjunctiones,
(i. e. Give money for sin.) And 'tis almost
incredible what Treasures these scanda-
lous affairs bring into the Dary Office
at Rome. And the Pope as pretended
Head of the Church has so interest'd him-
self in all that variety of Causes call'd
Ecclesiastical in all Popish Countreys, and so
entirely reserv'd the Decision of all those
that bring any profit to his own Court,
that this draws to is a vast attendance
of Ambassadors from all Popish Princes to
solicit their Master's business; and we
may be sure that they must not come
empty handed there if they wou'd plead
their Cause with success. For how rude
a Rebuke for ever St. Peter gave to Simon
Magus for offering him Money. His suc-
cessors are grown much wiser, and wou'd
have treated so fair a Chapter with
greater Civility and Tenderness. I know indeed, This shameful Traf-
fick, These scandalous arts of money-
catching,

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catching, have for many Ages occasion'd
the loud complaints of all Europe. Many
of the Popes themselves have own'd their
own Courts to be the spring of this abo-
minable corruption, and talk'd loud of
Reforming it. But alas when they have
made the attempt, they found the Di-
sease to be too rooted and strong for all
remedys, and have quickly given it over
as desperate and incurable. Nay when
these Complaints were renew'd at the
Council of Trent, and several specious
Decrets of Reformation were made there,
yet they were thro' the subtle manage-
ment of the See of Rome, Blinded by the
Councils referring the Reformation of these
Abuses to that very Court, whose Interest
was chiefly concerned in the support of
emascu'd. And are these Monsters of Avarice the
Vicars of that B. Savient, who had no
where on Earth to lay his Head? Are they
the Successors of St. Peter, who told the
Lame Cripple, Silver and Gold have I
none. But as Pope Innocent the 4th plea-
santly told Thomas Aquinas when he
found him in a Room where his Offi-
cers were counting a large Sum before
him. The Language of the Church is much
changed since that time. And sure the Bi-
shop

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shop of Rome cannot pretend that his Kingdom is not of this World, when the Wealth of all neighbouring Nations so plentifully flows into it.

But,

IV. Let us a little farther view the Administration of the Papal Empire.

And here every thing shews it to be a Kingdom of this World.

I have already observ'd, That there are all the Marks of External Pomp and Glory that are to be seen in other Earthly Kingdoms.

I have also suggested, How far the Papal Power has endeavour'd to engross to it self the cognizance of a vast multitude of Civil Causes. Such as those that relate to Testamentary and Matrimonial Affairs, To Oaths, &c. Tho' our B. Saviour was so shy of dividing an Inheritance, His Vicars sett up themselves for Rulers and Judges, even to dispose of Scepters and Crowns; and have often thrown all Europe into confusions and wars by their busy intermeddling with those important affairs of Secular Princes without being ever desir'd to interpose their arbitration.

But I would here take notice, How entirely the affairs of the Papal Empire are

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are manag'd by carnal and worldly Policy.

And this indeed the Admirers and Flatterers of the Court of Rome are so far from being asham'd of, that they rather glory in it. And Cardinal Pallavicini takes much pains not only to vindicate this, but to recommend that Court as the School of the most refined Policy in the World. And it will not be unuseful to take some notice of the subtle Artifices that it uses to support the grandure of what they call the holy See.

'Tis one obvious Artifice to cover this truly temporal Empire, under pretence of a Spiritual Domination. Thus the Pope's Territorys are call'd the Demeans of the Church and St. Peter's Patrimony. To pay Homage and Tribute to the Pope, or to kiss his slipper, is to throw our selves at the feet of the Apostles. To go on pilgrimage to Rome for gaining Indulgences is [*visitare limina Apostolorum*] to pay the Apostles a Visit at their own Home. For a Man to become the Pope's Vassal, is in their language, to hold of the H. See, and become Tributary to St. Peter. And indeed, How shou'd the Popes have ever been able with a few Pages of barbarous Latin to shake the Thrones of Princes, and embroyl all

Europe

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Escape in Wars, if they had not frighted a blind and superstitious People, by setting the venerable Names of St. Peter and St. Paul at the Head of their Bulls, and threatening all opposers with their terrible Indignation. And who durst in those ignorant Ages dispute the Papal Bulls when they pass under the sacred Name of Apostolical Canons and Ordinances, or the Decrees of the Apostolic See? Who durst question the Validity of his Sentence who was suppos'd to sit in St. Peter's Chair, and to have the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven at his Girdle? And doubtless the Temporal Grandeur of the Roman Popes greatly contributed in those ignorant Ages to contribute the greater Reverence to that spiritual Authority they pretended to.

Another great Branch of the Papal Religion has been to keep the Ruling part of the Clergy in all the Western Nations in the strictest dependence on what they call the Holy See. To this end they kept the power of Investiture of Princes, Archbishops, and Bishops in their own hands, and us'd an hundred Artifices to free them from the Civil Power, and procure 'em great Immunities under the Notion of the Bishopric and Rights of

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the Church and when *Princes* endeavour
not to vindicate their *Civil Power* as
against these unreasonable *Incroachments*.
The *Popes* by appearing in defence of
em, have by the *Superior Clergy* firm
ly to their interests, because these their
Sanctity seem to stand or fall with the
Papal Authority. But because even the
Papal Prelates have many of 'em taken
up a dangerous Opinion, & That their
Authority is as much of *divine Right*
as the *Pope's*. (A doctrine no way
relisht at *Rome*, where 'tis pretended,
That all *Bishops* derive their *Authority*
from the *A. See*). Therefore to ballance
their *Authority* (shou'd they sett it up in
any opposition to his), The *Roman Pops*
have sett up a vast number of *Religious*
Orders, whom they exempt from *Episcopal*
Jurisdiction, and thereby oblige to be-
come so many stout *Janissarys* for the de-
fence of that *Papal Power*, on which the
preservation of their great *Priviledges*
depends. And 'tis well known how
strange an influence and power these
Monks and *Friars* have over the Consci-
ences of the *Lay*, especially by that
grand Artifice of *auricular Confession*. So
that all attempts against the *Pope's* ex-
orbitant Power must be dangerous in a

Popish

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Popish Country, where he has so numerous *Partizans* that are the chief *directors* of the *Consciences* of an ignorant *People*.

'Tis another deep *itch* of *Papal Policy*, To link their own *Authority* as much as possible to the *Interests* of *secular Princes*; that they may be thereby the more strongly oblig'd to support it. As for Instance in *Portugal*, The best part of that *King's Revenue* arises from the *sale* of *Indulgences*, in which the *Prince* goes share with the *Pope*.

Another *Artifice* they have us'd, is to accommodate *Religion* to the various *humours* of mankind.

For those that affect the *severitys* of *Religion*, There is a great appearance and shew of *Austerity*, of *Mortification* and *Devotion* in their *Religious Orders*. Their Numerous pretended *Fasts*, Their coarse *Habits*, Their *Hair-cloths* and their *Whips*, Their laborious *Works of Penance*, and strict *Rules of Discipline* carry a great air of *Piety* to those that look no farther than the *Monks Combs*, and never saw the *inside* of their *Convents*.

On the other hand, To those that are for an *easier* and *pleasanter* way to *Heaven*, There are devices to secure their *Salvation* without any such *severitys*.

A kind

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kind Confessor will grant 'em absolution from *Eternal Punishment* upon very easy terms. And for the pains of Purgatory, There are so many *priviledg'd Altars*, so many *Images*, &c. where *Indulgences* may be had at a *cheap rate*; There are so many *Religious Orders* that will upon a *valuable Consideration* make a man *partaker* of all their *Merits*, and allow him the *benefit* of their *good works*, and especially *Masses* are so effectual a Relief, that they are in no great danger of those flames, unless they are very poor. But for them, I do not find that the *Roman Bishops* have any great *consideration*, They are left to *shift* as well as they can for themselves.

'Tis another great *Artifice* of *Papal Policy* to make their *publick Devotions* a grateful *Entertainment* to the *Senses* of Mankind.

To this purpose, We see their *Altars* adorn'd with the most glorious *Paintings*, or the most *stately Images*, enrich'd with *Gold*, or *Pearls*, and whatever can charm the *spectator's eyes*; We see their *Priests* officiating in *pompous and costly Habits*, Their *Churches* resound with the choicest *Instrumental and Vocal Musick*. And their *publick Processions* carry an air of *pomp* and *magnificence* every way proper to
please

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at the Senate, and among the Ministers
of superstitious People. The great design
of this most detestable sect of Popes
policy is to keep the People muffled up
in blindness and ignorance.
And this for this End, The Holy Scrip-
tures are so carefully lockt up in an
obscure Tongue, (For they are sensible
Where the Oracles of God come into their
hands, The grand Infalible Oracle of
God loses it's credit and authority.)
May they dare not trust their publick
devotions themselves in the vulgar Lan-
guage, for fear lest the perusal of them
might raise scruples and objections against
them in being every way for the Inte-
rest of the Court of Rome to cherish in the
People an implicit Faith and blind Obe-
dience.
I shall only take notice of one Instance
more of their carnal Policy, and that is
in the management of what they call
(tho most absurdly and falsely) their
General Councils. And I shall confine my
Observations to that last celebrated Coun-
cil of Treve. All Europe at that time made
loud Complaint of the Corruptions of
the Court of Rome. The Emperour and
other Popish Princes made earnest solli-
citations for the calling a free Council to
reform

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refrain. The *See of Rome* and all the
with great Reluctancy yields to their
importunate Demands. But this *Pope* to
secure his authority from any dangerous
attempts, opens the Council where few
were come to it but such *Italian Bishops*
as were entirely devoted to his Interests;
and then he settled all the Preliminaries,
and particularly that important one,
That nothing should be debated there, but
what his Legates should first propose. This
was during the several Sessions of that
Council complain'd against by most Bi-
shops of other Nations, as a manifest
Encroachment on the Liberty of the Coun-
cil. But all these complaints were from
time to time Eluded, and this Clause
was never given up, till the Council was
just coming to a Conclusion, so that
there was no farther use of it. By Ver-
tue of this one Clause, Matters were so
manag'd; That there was no Decree pass'd
in the Council but what had been deba-
ted and agreed on before at Rome. That
faithful Historian that has recorded the
Transactions of that Council, informs us,
How numerous Pensionaries the Court of
Rome maintain'd there, How often they
brib'd some of the German, the Spanish,
or French Bishops to betray the Councils
and

and designs their Brethren were forming in their private Cabals, for retrenching the Pope's exorbitant Power. And 'tis pleasant to observe, That when either the *Ambassadors of Princes*, or the *Prelates* made any attempts to strike at the *Papal Authority*, They were successfully eluded by the *Partizans of the Court of Rome*, who sett 'em presently by the Ears together. Some insisting on correcting the abuses of the *Episcopal Power* which pleas'd the *Ambassadors*, but did not relish with the *Prelates*. Others urging the *Retrenching of the Regal Power in Ecclesiastical Affairs*, which the *Bishops* approv'd, but the *Ambassadors* were ready in their Master's Name to protest against. And thus the *Court of Rome* by dividing her Enemies broke the neck of all their designs, and kept her *exorbitant Power safe and untouch'd*. And to compleat all, The *Bishop of Rome* by prevailing with the Council to send their Decrees to him, for *Confirmation* got his *Superiority* in effect decided. And to secure it, The *Pope* immediately after the Council publishes a *Bull*, in which he reserves the *Interpretation* of the Council's Decrees to himself. So that all their pretended Decrees for Reformation signify

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may no more then *the Pope* please.

In a word, All *Europe* has been long sensible that the most *refined Policy* reigns in *the Court of Rome*; and runs thro' all their Administrations. And they are so proud of it there, as occasion'd one of the *Popes* to pass that scornful Complement upon one of the French Ministers at his Court that sett up for a great Politician, *That he reason'd well for a Beast that came from the other side of the Alps.* But let the World be judge, Whether all the *dissembling Arts*, whether all the various *Windings* and *Turnings* of *Serpentine Craft*, be the characters of that *Kingdom of Christ* that is *not of this World*?

But,

Let us a little observe *the manner of propagating this Papal Empire.*

And this has been done not by the method of *Light* and *Conviction*, But of that of *coercive Force*, nay of *Savage Cruelty*. 'Tis true indeed the *Pope's Hands* are not immediately dip't in Blood. But that is because he has prevail'd with bigotted Princes to become his *Lictors* and the *Executioners* of his *Decrees*. 'Tis they blindly send him their *Arm* and their *Sword* to *destroy* the *Opposers* of his *Sovereign Authority*. But as *the Devil* is said to cast those into *Prison*, whom his Instru-

D

ments

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ments at his Instigation did persecute,
2 Rev. 10 v. So are the *Bishops of Rome* char-
gable with all the violence and cruelty
which is Exercis'd in pursuance of their
Sentence, or at their earnest Sollicitation.

And sure if we do but View the *Bi-
shops of Rome* one while raising *Crossados*,
not to recover the Holy Land from *In-
fidels*, but to destroy some hundred thou-
sands of *Christians*, (whose chief Crime
by their own Confession, was their
blaspheming the Roman Court and Clergy.)
When we behold 'em Erecting every
where those *Inquisition-Tribunals* that ren-
dered themselves the abomination and
horror of all *Europe* by their arbitrary
and cruel proceedings, against many
thousands of pretended Hereticks. When
we see 'em Solliciting all Princes in their
Communion to the making and Executing
of *Sanguinary Laws* against all that at-
tempted a *Reformation*; When we see 'em
kindling a thousand flames all over *Eu-
rope* for the Burning those they were
pleas'd to brand for *Hereticks*; When we
hear 'em Applauding and Abetting the
most perfidious and inhuman *Massacres*,
such as that of *Paris*, and this of *Ireland*;
When even such a *Pope* as *Innocent the*
11th, (so fam'd for his *Morals* above most
of his Predecessors) shall cry up this Fr.
Kings

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King's perfidious *Violation of the Edict of Nantz*, and the savage method of *dragoon- ing* that prepar'd the way for it, as the *Immortal Glory of his Reign*; When we hear the *present Pope* in his *Bull* against the *Gamifars* approving the Cruelty of his Pre- decessors, and proposing their *laudable Example* for his *Imitation*; What do we see in the conduct of these pretended *Pi- cars of Christ* that looks like the *Spirit* of that *merciful Jesus* that *came not to destroy Men's Lives but to save 'em*? What can we discern of his *character* in 'em, who came to *lay down his own Life for his sheep*, not to condemn millions of 'em to *slaughter and butchery*? And if our *B. Lord* so re- buk'd his disciples, when they *call'd for fire from Heaven* to consume real *Here- ticks*, What wou'd he say to those that have kindled such *flames on Earth* to de- stroy only *pretended ones*?

I shou'd in the

IV and last place, Consider the *Design of the Papal Empire*.

And this is so manifestly *opposite* to the great *Design of the Kingdom of Christ*, as may further demonstrate the *falsehood of the Papal Pretensions*.

To treat this Head at large wou'd lead me into a vast Field. I shall there- fore only suggest a few Heads to your Meditation.

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It was one great *Design* of Christ's Kingdom to overturn the *Pagan Idolatry*, and particularly both *their Polytheism*, and *Their Worship of Demons* as a middle sort of Beings between them and the Supreme Gods that were *Mediators* between us and them. And to this purpose, The Gospel proposes to us, *One God and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus.*

But any one may Easily see, How Evidently *the Pagan Demon-worship* is reviv'd in those *Devotions* that the Church of Rome pays to *Angels and Saints.*

The *Kingdom of Christ* is a *Kingdom of Light*, erected for the diffusion of divine Knowledge thro' the World.

The *Papal* is a *Kingdom of Darknes* in which the means of divine Knowledge are lock't up, and the *Oracles of God* Silenc'd.

Christ came to restore the Worship of God to that *Spirituality* and *Simplicity* that is most *Sutable* to his Nature.

The *Roman Bishops* have *debas'd* it by such an incredible Number of *unscriptural, vain, ludicrous, superstitious rites*, as exceed either the *Jewish or Pagan Rituals*, and are good for nothing but to *overload* and *stifle* all true devotion, and to turn it into empty *Pageantry* and *Shew.*

Christ came to recover men to *inward* and *real Holiness*, To a conformity to the Law of God.

But

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But how many Artifices the Roman Bishops have made use of to enervate the force of God's holy Laws, to evacuate the Necessity of sincere obedience, To give men the prospect of absolution and pardon upon easier Terms, wou'd require a Volume rather than a short Discourse to unfold.

And now upon the whole. If any man can reconcile these Characters of the Papal Empire, It's Secular Magnificence and Pomp, it's Earthly Original and Rise, It's unsupportable Pride and insatiable Avarice, It's notorious Encroachments on the Civil Power, It's carnal and often bellish Policy, and it's detestable blood-thirstiness and cruelty; I say, If any man can reconcile all this with the character here given of the Kingdom of Christ, viz. That 'tis not a Kingdom of this World, he need never despair of establishing a Communion between Light and Darkness, and an Alliance between Christ and Belial.

Having thus dispatch'd what I undertook to shew, That the Papal Empire is by no means the Kingdom of Christ, I shou'd now make some Reflexions thereon. I shall content my self with naming a few.

I. If the Papal Empire be not the Kingdom of Christ, It looks at least very like that of Antichrist. I shall

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I shall not enter on the consideration of those several Passages that are suppos'd to speak of *Antichrist's Kingdom*. As *2 Thes. 2. 13, 16 & 17th, Rev. &c.* I shall only apply the Observation that some made concerning our *Saviour* himself to this his pretended *Vicar*. When the People debated whether he were the Christ, They very well reason'd, *When Christ cometh, Will he do more miracles than those which this Man hath done? VII John 31.* So may we reason, *When the great Antichrist comes, Will he do more mischievous things, than the Roman Bishops have done? Will he abuse the Name and Authority of Christ to cloak more abominable Pride and Avarice, and carnal Policy, and inhuman Cruelty, and woful Corruption of the Christian Religion to the subverting the great designs of it, and the destroying of millions of it's sincere Professors, than the Roman Popes have done? What can be said of the most oppressive Empires that the Scriptures represent under the character of Beasts, (as Lions, Leopards, Bears, &c.) that any way equals the notorious guilt of this Papal Empire? May we not say of them in allusion to what was said of Saul & David, That where these Pagan Empires have slain their thousands, The Papal has slain it's ten, nay it's hundred thousands.*

II. We

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II. We may hence be excited to adore the Goodness of God for our eminent Deliverances from that *Papal Tyranny* that is so opposite to the Spirit & *Kingdom of Christ*.

We are thereby freed from the scandalous *Taxes* and *Tributes* that once drain'd our Wealth into that sink of the *Roman Coffers*. The *Crowns* of our *Princes* stand fast on their Heads, without any danger of being shaken by the *thunders* of the *Vatican*, which now make no noise, because they are sensible they can do no *Execution*. But above all, Our *Consciences* are freed from that unsupportable *Tyranny* that had so long enslav'd so great a part of the *Christian World*. We enjoy *Christianity* in it's *simplicity* and *purity*; and are under the *easy yoke of Christ*, not under that intolerable one of *Papal Canons* and *Injunctions*. Those *Flames* are now happily *extinguish'd* which *Papal Zeal* had kindled. And our *Churches* are not made such a deplorable scene of ruin and desolation as those of *France* and other *Kingdoms*. And all these invaluable *Mercys* have been preserv'd by a series of wonderful *Providences*, that have recover'd us from the brink of ruin.

III. Let us pray for the *overturning this Papal Empire*.

It stands in so direct opposition to the *Kingdom of Christ*, that the *one* must be advanc'd upon the ruins of the *other*. And we shou'd second our Prayers with our hearty endeavors in our station to prevent the Return of *Papal Tyranny*, and particularly by adhering to the *Protestant Succession* as now establish'd by Law, in opposition to the *claim* of any *Popish Pretender*.

IV. Let us more chearfully subject ourselves to the *Kingdom of Christ*, as a just return for the divine Goodness in shaking the *Papal Yoke* from off our Necks.

Let us pay all chearful and dutiful subjection to the *Glorify'd Son of God* as our *heavenly King and Lord*. Let us embrace his sacred *Truths*, and yield a sincere *obedience* to his holy and gracious *Laws*. Let us aspire to the *Glorious, Invisible, Eternal Rewards* of his *Kingdom*. Let us cherish that deep *Humility*, that godly *Sincerity* and *Simplicity*, and that *mortification to this World*, that are necessary characters of his *acceptable subjects*. And let us promote the *Interest of his Kingdom* by *methods* suitable to the nature of it, even those of *Light & Persuasion*, of *Meekness & Gentleness*, of *Kindness & Love*. And let us account what service we can do for advancing the great designs of it, as the most valuable end for which we can live.

A
SERMON

PREACH'D

At DUBLIN

On the 23^d of October, 1703,

BEING

The Anniversary Day of
Thanksgiving

For The
Deliverance of this CITY

From The

Irish Rebellion, 1641.

By J. B.

DUBLIN,

Printed for the use of the Author,

1707.

A

SERMON

PREACHED

AT DUBLIN

On the 4th of October, 1793



The Anniversary of

Thanksgiving

For the

Deliverance of this CITY

From the

late Rebellion, 1794.

B. J. R.

DUBLIN

Printed for the use of the Author

at O. J. R.

A Sermon, &c.

XXIII Matth. from 29 to 36 v.

29. *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees Hypocrites, Because ye build the Tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the Sepulchres of the Righteous.*

30. *And say, If we had been in the days of our Fathers, We wou'd not have been partakers with 'em in the blood of the Prophets.*

31. *Wherefore ye be witnesses unto your selves that ye are the children of them that kill'd the Prophets.*

32. *Fill ye up then the measure of your Fathers.*

33. *Ye Serpents, ye generation of Vipers, How can ye escape the damnation of Hell?*

34. *Wherefore behold I send unto you Prophets and Wise-Men and Scribes, and some of 'em ye shall kill and crucify, and some of 'em ye shall scourge in your Synagogues, and persecute 'em from City to City.*

35. *That upon you may come all the righteous Blood-shed upon the Earth, from the*
A 2
blood

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blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Za-
charias Son of Barachias, whom ye slew
between the Temple and the Altar.*

36. *Verily I say unto you, That all these
things shall come upon this Generation.*

IT requires no long Preface to shew,
How applicable the words, I have
read are to the occasion of this *Anniver-
sary-Day*. 'Tis very well known, How
deep a hand the *Romish Clergy* had in that
treacherous and Inhuman Massacre, that
about 62 years ago turn'd this flourishing
Kingdom into a Field of Blood. And I
need not tell you, How notoriously
their Brethren in this Age have acted
the *same* or rather a *worse* part in the
neighbouring Kingdom of *France*, suf-
ficient to demonstrate that they are ani-
mated by the *same Principles*, and that
the *same Spirit of Persecution* still reigns
among 'em for which their *Predecessors*
stand so justly *infamous* in the Records
of the foregoing Ages. And if you trace
all the several Persecutions of these latter
Ages to their *Centre and Spring*, you'll
easily discover it in the *See of Rome*; In
her skirts the *Blood of the Saints*, and the
Martyrs of Jesus is to be found, and at
her Door the guilt of *shedding* it princi-
pally

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pally lyes. So that the *Romish Hierarchy* may in these characters which our B. Saviour gives of the *vile Hypocrisy* and *persecuting Cruelty* of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, See their own *Picture* drawn in *lively* but *hideous* colours. If there be any *disparity*, 'Tis only in this, That the *Colours* are *too faint* for them; The Guilt of the *Romish Clergy* having by many degrees exceeded that which our B. Lord here charges the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* with. (as I shall have occasion to shew in drawing the parallel between 'em.) And the consideration of this subject may be of great use to us all. It may serve to illustrate some part of the *Prophecys* of the New-Testament; It may confirm our belief of the *Reformed Religion* (which is no other then *Uncorrupted Christianity*) by discovering to us the genuine characters of an *Antichristian Spirit*, that have been so visible for several Ages in the *Opposers* of it; It may form in us a just Abhorrence of the *Spirit of Persecution*, and the *vanity* of those *hypocritical pretences* us'd to cover it; It may confirm our Faith in the accomplishment of divine Threatnings against incorrigible Persecutors; And to add no more, It may excite our thankfulness for

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being deliver'd from their destructive fury and violence. On these and many such accounts the prosecution of it may be very instructive to us.

I do by no means intend to insist on all that is observable in this large Portion of Scripture I have now read; That wou'd carry me beyond the bounds of Time. I shall therefore confine my self to *two general Heads*, which are chiefly remarkable in these words of our Lord.

Viz.

I. *That 'tis gross Hypocrisy for those that pretend to pay extraordinary Honour to dead Saints, to be violent Persecutors of living ones.*

II. *Where this spirit of Persecution do's reign in a Body of Men for several Ages together, Those that do herein imitate their Predecessors, do thereby draw the guilt of that blood they have shed upon their own Heads, and will expose themselves to a Vengeance proportionable to so aggravated Guilt.*

I need not enlarge to shew, How naturally these *Observations* arise from the words; All therefore I shall do in prosecuting 'em, is

First, To shew briefly, *How justly our B. Saviour applys these two Observations to the*
the

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the Scribes and Pharisees in his time. And then

Secondly, Shew, How manifestly applicable they are to the Roman Bishops and Clergy in this Age. And

Thirdly, To make some practical Reflections upon the whole.

I begin with the
First Head, To shew, *How justly our B. Saviour applys these two Observations to the Scribes and Pharisees in his time.*

And here I must distinctly consider

I. *His Charge of Hypocrisy against 'em for paying so great honour to dead Saints whilst they persecuted living ones.*

II. *His Threatnings denounc't against 'em for imitating the persecuting cruelty of their Ancestors.*

I. Let us consider, Our Saviour's charge of Hypocrisy against 'em for paying so great Honour to dead Saints while they persecuted living ones.

He tells 'em, *They built the Tombs of the Prophets, and garnish't the Sepulchres of the Righteous.* They exprest hereby a Zeal for preserving their Memorys, and transmitting their fame and honour to succeeding generations. They pretended to own and reverence 'em as the faithful Servants of God, and many of 'em

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'em as *Martyrs* in his cause, who sacrific'd their Lives to his Interest, and for the maintenance of his true Worship in the World. Nay, they pretended hereby to condemn the *Injustice* and *Cruelty* of their *Fathers*, and were ready to say, *If they had liv'd in their days, they would not have been partakers with 'em in the blood of the Prophets.* v. 30. So far their conduct seem'd plausible and fair. For we may observe by the way, That they went no farther than to keep up the honour, and perpetuate the memory of the Prophets and Righteous Men of the foregoing Ages. Tho' they built their Tombs, and garnish'd their Sepulchres, They were far from dedicating Temples or Synagogues to 'em. Tho' they pretended to honour their memorys, yet they never went so far as to sett 'em up as Objects of Religious Worship, to address their Prayers or Praises to 'em, or make use of their Mediation. Nor did they sett up their Images or Shrines, or their pretended Reliques as the Objects of publick Devotion. These monstrous Excesses are only to be found in the Church of Rome, who has carried her unwarrantable Respect to dead Saints, as well as Cruelty to living ones, to a far greater height than the most degenerate

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nerate part of the *Jewish Church* ever did. (Of which more hereafter.)

If it be then enquir'd, What do's our B. Lord condemn 'em here for ?

Ans. For their vile *Hypocrisy*, In pretending thus to honour the *Prophets* and *Righteous Men* of former Ages, and to condemn the Injustice and Cruelty of their *Fathers* in shedding their blood ; When yet they themselves were acted with the same *spirit of Malignity* as their *Fathers* had been, and were as ready to persecute the faithful Messengers and Servants of God sent to them, nay to embrue their hands in their blood, as ever their *Fathers* had been. And 'tis observable that our Lord takes occasion from their own words to tell 'em of their guilt. They call'd those that had kill'd the *Prophets* their *Fathers*. And upon this he tells 'em, *They witnessed against themselves that they were the children of such as kill'd the Prophets. q'd.* You do well to call 'em your *Fathers*. For you are really their *Children*, Not only by *natural Descent*, but a *Resemblance* of 'em in their malignant *Enmity* and *Rage* against the *Prophets* and *Saints* of God. Where we may observe, That our Lord by a just *Irony* puts a sense and construction

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etion on their words, different indeed from what they intended, but very conformable to their Temper and Actions. They pretended, That *had they liv'd in the days of their Fathers, They wou'd not have been partakers with 'em in the Blood of the Prophets.* But he intimates to 'em, That their *Practice* wou'd soon confute their *Profession*. He foresaw how soon they wou'd with wicked hands shed his own blood. And that those *Prophets*, and *Scribes* and *Wise-men*, Those holy Apostles and other faithful Dispensers of his Gospel, whom he wou'd send to 'em, wou'd meet with no better usage than he had done before 'em. That of them, *Some they wou'd kill and crucify, Some they wou'd scourge in their Synagogues, and persecute from City to City.* And accordingly we may in the brief History of the *Acts* see how exactly they verify'd our Lord's prediction of their Cruelty,

And well might our B. Lord charge 'em with gross *Hypocrisy* on this account. For if they had had that real Veneration for the *Prophets* and *Righteous Men* of former Ages they pretended to, by *building their Tombs and garnishing their Sepulchres*; They wou'd have shew'd it by their profound Respect to those whom
God

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God in that very Age sent to them, especially to his *Incarnate Son*, whom he sent as the great *Prophet* of his Church to bring the most perfect *Révelation* of his Will; Whose *Doctrine* had a more solemn Attestation from numerous and uncontrolled *Miracles*, and carry'd far brighter characters of a divine Original, than what any former Prophets had deliver'd; Nay in whose *Person and unspotted Life* there was a more resplendent Image of *god like Purity and Holiness* than had been in any *Prophet* that ever went before him. And if their *Malignity* was so great, as to prompt 'em to reject that holy *Doctrin* with scorn and contempt; Nay if it wou'd farther prompt 'em to embue their hands in the blood of him that brought it; and to persecute his Apostles and those whom he sent to publish it (tho' no way inferior to any former *Prophets* either for extraordinary *Gifts*, or for most exemplary *Piety and Holiness*) with such restless fury and malice, (As we know that it actually did prompt 'em to do all this). This wou'd sufficiently demonstrate, That the same spirit of *Diabolism* and *Malignity* acted them, which they pretended to condemn in their *Fathers*; and that all their pretended

tended *Respect* to former Prophets and Saints was no better then *vile Dissimulation*, that serv'd only to aggravate the guilt of their *persecuting Cruelty*, and to render it more justly odious and detestable to God and Men. Our Saviour had already some Experience of their malignant Enmity against him, and here foretells 'em, what farther mischievous Effects it wou'd produce, sufficient to justify his charge against 'em, That they were the true *children of their Fathers*, the genuine *Seed of the Serpent*, and such a *generation of Vipers*, as their murderous *Fathers* had been.

Nor wou'd it have excus'd the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* in their Persecution of our Lord and his Apostles, or free'd 'em from this charge of Hypocrisy, shou'd they have pretended, It was *Prophets* and *Righteous Men* whose blood their Fathers shed, Whereas they prosecuted our Lord Jesus as a *Deceiver of the People*, and put him afterwards to Death as a *Blasphemer*, and prosecuted his *Apostles* under the Notion of *Enemies to the Law of Moses*, and *Movers of Sedition among the People*. For their *Fathers* had upon the same or the like pretences treated the *Prophets* of their Age with such barbarous *Cruelty*. They charg'd
em

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em as *Troublers of Israel*, Disturbers of the publick Peace, and *Enemies* to their Government, (as *Ahab* did *Elijah*, 1 Kings xviii. 17.) Or as *Traytors* to their Country, and such as sought not the welfare but the hurt and ruin of it, (As the *Princes of Judah* charg'd *Jeremiah*, 38 ch. 4.) And this is but the common method of all Persecutors, to cover their Cruelty under the Notion of *Justice*; and to charge those they persecute with some heinous Crimes, that they may be thought to deserve all the severitys they suffer. They do herein act as his children, who is a *Liar* as well as *Murderer*, and prompts 'em to palliate their hellish barbarity by false and odious accusations. To Murder Prophets and Righteous Men under that Notion and character, were openly to avow the Wickedness and Injustice of their own actions, and manifestly condemn themselves. But to punish 'em under the Notion of Criminals, of Seditious Disturbers of the publick Peace, of Hereticks or Schismatics, This makes their Persecution carry some specious appearance with it. This puts a fair colour on their Sanguinary Edicts and Laws, and the rigorous Execution of 'em, as if these were acts of publick Justice. Nay this makes their highest acts of illegal violence their

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their bloody *Massacres* themselves, pass for laudable transports of *Catholick Zeal*. So that such false accusations of those that are truly *Prophets* and *Righteous Men*, is so far from *extenuating*, that it do's but *aggravate* the guilt of their Persecutors. 'Tis adding the guilt of base *Calumny* and *Slander*, to that of *Injustice* and *Cruelty*. As if it were not enough to *destroy their Lives* without endeavouring to *ruin their Reputation* too. As if it were not enough to expose 'em unjustly to the most grievous *sufferings*, without doing their utmost to rob 'em of the *pity* and *compassion* due to *innocent Sufferers*.

So justly do's our Lord here reproach the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* for vile *Hypocrisy* for pretending so great *Veneration* for the *Prophets* and *Saints* of former Ages, whom their *Fathers* had persecuted, When they themselves were ready to treat the greatest of all *Prophets*, and the most eminent *Messengers* that ever God sent to that sinful People with the same unjust and barbarous cruelty; When they were inclin'd even to go beyond their *Fathers* in the guilt of *Persecution*.

I come then,

Secondly, To consider the *Threatning*
our

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our Lord denounces against 'em for imitating the persecuting cruelty of their Fathers.

To this purpose he bids 'em at v. 32, *Fill up the measure of their Fathers.* 'Tis a severe *Sarcasm*, "q'd. Go on to tread in "the steps of your murderous Fathers, "Add the guilt of your Persecuting cruelty to the measure of theirs, till the "*Ephab* be full, and you ripe for destructive Vengeance.

And accordingly, He forewarns 'em both of that *Eternal* and *Temporal Vengeance*, their guilt wou'd expose 'em to.

He forewarns 'em of the *Eternal Vengeance* due to it, at v. 33. *Ye Serpents, ye generation of Vipers, How can ye escape the Damnation of Hell?*

And well might he call 'em a *Serpentine* and *Viperous* Brood, when they had in their Temper and Disposition so much of the *falsehood* and *cruelty* of the *old Serpent*, and by their actions were ready to prove themselves his *children* who is a *Liar* and a *Murderer* from the beginning. See viii John 44. They were about to shew themselves the *Seed of the Serpent* with a witness, when they were about to embrace their hands in his blood, who was the *promised Seed of the Woman*, who
came

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came to break the Head (and destroy the usurped Dominion) of the old Serpent, III. Gen. 15.

And as all *Ungodliness* and *Unrighteousness* of Men when impenitently persisted in, will expose 'em to the *Damnation of Hell*, much more will so heinous a guilt as this of *Persecution*. For such persecutors do of all men most openly oppose the Interest and Kingdom of God, by endeavouring to destroy those whom he employs as his Instruments to propagate Truth and Holiness in the World. And they do thereby manifestly abett the *Devil's Cause*, and endeavour to promote it by *methods* most suitable to the disposition of that accursed Spirit, viz. By *Lying* and *Cruelty*. They first endeavour to represent the faithful Servants of God, as the *worst of Malefactors*, and by the falsest accusations would make those of whom the world is not worthy, pass for the *vilest of Men* that deserve not to live on the face of the Earth; And having thus loaded 'em with the *blackest Calumnys*, they fall upon 'em with *merciless rage*; Having thus as it were cloth'd 'em in the skins of *wild beasts*, they expose 'em to be *destroy'd*. And can such as thus plainly act the *Devil's part* in *falsehood* and *blood-thirsty*

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thirsty cruelty, and that in order to the support of his *dark Kingdom*, ever hope to escape the *Damnation of Hell*? No, sure, They of all Men who partake so deeply of the *Devil's greatest guilt*, must expect to share in his *punishment*. They that act here so like *Incarnate Fiends*, must expect to be doom'd to the same *everlasting Fire* prepared for the *Devil* and for his *fallen Angels*, 25 Matth. 42.

But our Lord also forewarns 'em of the *Temporal Vengeance*, they were to expect, when they had *fill'd up the measure of their Fathers guilt*.

And therefore having foretold 'em at v. 34. How they wou'd use those *Prophets and Wise-men and Scribes*, whom he shou'd send to 'em, i. e. Those *Apostles* and other faithful *Dispensers* of his Gospel, (to whom he here gives the *Titles* usually given by the *Jews* to *Eminent Teachers*,) viz. That some of 'em they wou'd kill and crucify, others they wou'd scourge in their *Synagogues*, and persecute from *City to City*. He adds at v. 35, 36. These awful words, That upon you may come all the righteous Blood shed on the Earth, from the Blood of righteous Abel, unto the Blood of Zecharias the Son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the Temple and the Altar, Verily I say unto you, All
B these

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these things shall come upon this genera-
tion.*

In speaking to this Threathing, I
shall briefly Enquire,

I. Who this *Zecharias the Son of Bara-
chias* was?

Itly and chiefly, In what sense our
Saviour foretells, *That all the righteous
Blood shed on the Earth, shou'd come upon
that generation of the Jews, And how the
Justice of such a Doom appears?*

I. We may here Enquire, Who this
Zacharias the Son of Barachias was?

Ans. I cannot think this was *Zacha-
rias* the Father of *John the Baptist*, Be-
cause neither do's the Scripture mention
whose Son he was, Nor is there any cre-
dible account of his being *slain* at all,
much less *between the Porch and the Altar*.

And for *Zacharias* one of the lesser
Prophets that was the Son of *Barachias*,
we neither read of his being *slain*, nor
cou'd he be slain between the *Porch* and
Altar, when the *Temple* in his time was
but a *building*.

And for the *Zacharias* mention'd by
Josephus, he was the Son of *Baruch* not of
Barachias, And he is not so much as men-
tion'd by that *Author*, under the Notion
of a *Prophet* at all, but only a *good Man*.

I there-

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I therefore incline most to their Opinion who understand this of *Zacharias the Son of Jehoadab the Priest*, who because he reprov'd the People for *Transgressing the Commandments of the Lord*, (Particularly by their Revolt from the Purity of his Worship) was stoned with stones at the Commandment of the King, (viz. *Joash*) in the Court of the House of the Lord, 2 Chron. 24. 21. &c.

And whereas 'tis objected that this *Zacharias* was the Son of *Jehoadab*, 'Tis answer'd, That *Jehoadab* and *Barachias* signify the same thing in the Hebrew Tongue, and 'twas usual with the Jews to change those Names in which the Letters of the Name *Jehovah* were found.

And whereas 'tis objected, That this *Zacharias* was slain many Ages before; I think there is no force in that objection if it be duly consider'd, That our Lord speaking of *all the righteous Blood shed upon the Earth*, do's very fitly mention the *Blood of Abel* shed before the giving of the Law, The *Blood of Zacharias* the last Prophet, whose Blood is mention'd in Scripture as *shed under the Law*, And he had already mention'd the *Blood of his own Apostles and Teachers*, whom he foretells themselves wou'd shed, and thereby

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fill up the measure of their Father's guilt. And this *Zacharias* seems fitly conjoyn'd with *Abel*, because as *Abel's Blood* was said to cry to Heaven for Vengeance on him that shed it, So *Zacharias* is particularly recorded to have said at the shedding of his innocent Blood, *The Lord look upon it and require it*, 2 Chron. 24. 22.

And the words following render it the more probable that this was the *Zacharias* our Lord intended, because he seems in allusion to the particular manner of his Death to cry out, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that stonest the Prophets, &c.*

But,

III. It concerns us chiefly to Enquire, In what sense, Our Saviour foretells, *That all the Righteous Blood shed on the Earth shou'd come on that generation, from the blood of righteous Abel, &c.* And how the Justice of such a Doom appears?

Ans. We must by no means suppose that God inflicts upon any one sinful Generation, a greater punishment then their own particular guilt deserves.

But we must consider, That God in his dealings with a Nation or Collective Body of Men, is not wont to come to the Execution of destructive Vengeance upon 'em, till after long Exercise of Patience,

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ence, and till they have fill'd up the *measure of publick or National Guilt*. And we must also consider, That when succeeding generations that are told of the sins of their *Ancestors*, and of the *Monitory Judgments* of God inflicted on the account of 'em, instead of being warn'd thereby, do tread in the steps of their wicked *Ancestors*, and imitate them in their provocations, This greatly aggravates their National guilt, and ripens 'em for *destructive Vengeance*. And accordingly, When a just God comes to execute destructive Vengeance on such a People, tho' it do not in reality exceed the aggravated demerit of the *present generation*, (For on the contrary, No temporal punishments equal the desert of such sins) Yet it is intended by him as a *mark* of his just *Displeasure* against the sins of their *Ancestors* too, whose guilt the present generation have in some measure drawn upon their own Heads, by *approving and imitating* their Example. So that the guilt of *former Ages* may be said to come on the *present Generation*, when they are expos'd to that *desolating Wrath* of his, which he is not wont to inflict upon a People, till they have for a *long tract of Time*, and usually for several suc-

cessive Generations, persisted in the same heinous and crying Sins. God wou'd deal with the present race of the *Malignant Jews* with that inexorable Severity, which tho' it was no greater then they themselves had *merited*, yet it was greater then he was wont to *inflict* on one single generation, and was design'd to be a Declaration and Testimony of his just Indignation against *all the righteous Blood shed upon the Earth* to that very day, and particularly all that had been shed by their guilty *Ancestors*, and to which they had been as it were *Accessory* by following their Example.

And this I take to be the true account of the *sense* of this Threatning, and a clear Vindication of the *Equity* of it.

And accordingly, We know that this Threatning of our Lord had about 40 years after a full but dreadful accomplishment. On this Generation came *all the righteous Blood shed upon the Earth*, in such an *astonishing* and *terrible Vengeance*, as no Nation cou'd ever parallel before. Divine Wrath came upon 'em even to the uttermost, in such a succession of dismal destructive Calamitys, as not only ruin'd their Capital City, but ras't all the foundations of their Civil Polity, and scatter'd 'em

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'em as as *Vagabonds* over the face of the Earth, to be the standing monuments of divine severity to all successive Ages. Such a dreadful thing is it to have the horrid guilt of *Persecution* handed down in a Nation from one Age to another.

The *Blood* of God's *Prophets* and *Saints* when thus shed thro' several successive Generations, will have a *loud cry*, and at last draw down such *amazing Destruction*, as shall convince the world, that tho' a patient God bore long, yet he will at last terribly avenge so heinous guilt.

Having thus consider'd our B. Saviour's *Charge* against the *Jews*, and the *awful Doom* he passes on 'em, I proceed (according to what I propos'd).

Secondly, To shew, How manifestly applicable all this is to the *Roman Pope and Clergy*.

And 'tis observable, That tho' our Saviour intended this *Charge* against the Body of the *Jewish Nation*, yet he particularly levels it against the *Scribes* and the *Pharises*, who as they made a greater pretension to *sanctity* than others, so their having a chief hand in all the *Persecutions* of that Age did render their *Hypocrisy* the more notorious and detestable. So tho' our Lord's *Charge* and *Threatning*

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be applicable to all those *Popish* Countrys in which this Guilt of *Persecution* is continued, yet 'tis in a more particular manner applicable to the *Papal Hierarchy*, who as they make higher pretensions to *Sanctity* than others, so their having the most guilty hand in *shedding the blood of Saints*, renders their *Hypocrisy* the more manifest and justly odious. And therefore 'tis as to them, I shall chiefly draw the *parallel*, not excluding those that concur with 'em as the *Executioners* of their bloody cruelty.

And I shall consider, How they have imitated the *Hypocrisy* of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* in their high pretensions of *Honouring Dead Saints*, while they persecuted *Living ones*.

That they highly pretend to *honour deceased Saints*, I need not prove. They themselves glory in it, and are ready in their blind Zeal to treat all those as *Enemies to the Saints* or *Despisers of 'em*, who dare not joyn with 'em in those unwarrantable Excesses of Devotion which they pay unto 'em. They not only *build their Tombs* and *garnish their Sepulchres*, but choose to *Erect their Altars* there, and to *dedicate Temples and Days* to their Honour.

Nay

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Nay if they can pretend to any *Reliques* of their *Bodys*, they are preserv'd in costly *Cabinets*, and on the days dedicated to 'em are expos'd with great solemnity as *Objects of the People's Devotion*. Nay to such a height is their *Idolatry* as well as *Superstition* come, that they have made it an Article of their Religion *That the Saints are to be invocated or pray'd unto*; So that this incommunicable Branch of divine Worship (which supposes an unlimited *Knowledge*, and *Presence*, and *Power* in the *Object* of it) is most injuriously paid to *meer Creatures*. Besides they have entrench't upon the peculiar Honour of *Christ* as our *only Mediator* by setting them up as *Mediators of Intercession* for us. Nay so manifestly have they transcrib'd the Copy of the *Heathens* in their *Demon-worship*, That the *Images* of the *Saints* are set up in their Temples, as well as those of *Christ*, or the *H. Trinity*, and have the like External Homage, of *Incense*, *kissing*, *bowing*, or *prostration* paid to 'em. And this gross violation of the 2d *Command* is made an essential part of their *Faith* and *Worship*. And the general allowed practice of that Church is yet more scandalous than their *Doctrin* it self. The stream of the People's Worship is in a great

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a great measure turn'd from God to the *B. Virgin* and other *Saints*. Her *Psalter* is their common *Manual*; *Oblations* and *Vows* to her or some other *Saint*, and *Pilgrimages* to this or that celebrated *Shrine* of theirs, makes up the chief part of the *Laitie's* Devotion. And to recommend this sort of Devotion the more to the ignorant but superstitious *Vulgar*, a great part of their Preaching is taken up in the extravagant *Praises* of this or that *Saint*, and those made up of such *fabulous* and often *ridiculous* Relations concerning 'em, as carry the evident marks of *forgery* and *falsehood* engraven upon 'em.

So that the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* kept within tolerable bounds of respect when they contented themselves with *building the Tombs of the Prophets*, and *garnishing the Sepulchres of the Righteous*. Whereas the *Romish Clergy* have exceeded all just bounds in the honour they pretend to pay to 'em, having made all the *Idolatry*s and *superstitions* of the *Pagan-Religion* in their *Demon-worship* their *Pattern*; Nay in some Instances they have gone far beyond it, as particularly in *Rifling the Tombs and Sepulchres of their Saints* to furnish their *Altars* from thence with *objects of Devotion*. A height of *Extravagance* and

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and Folly that seems peculiar to themselves.

And now One wou'd expect That those who pretend so highly to *honour deceased Saints*, shou'd proportionably *esteem and respect Living ones*. Those that are so solicitous to celebrate the Piety of *Primitive Christians* and *Martyrs*, shou'd reverence the like Piety and Holiness wherever they see any eminent Patterns of it in the Age wherein they live. Whereas if these pretended Votarys of *dead Saints* do treat those very persons of the present Age who are their genuin *successors* in *maintaining the same divine Truths*, and in *adorning 'em with the same Exemplary Holiness of Life*, not only with *hatred and contempt*, but with *malignant rage and cruelty*. 'Tis manifest that their *Practise* confutes all their specious *pretensions*, and convicts 'em of vile and odious *Hypocrisy*.

And yet this has been most notoriously the guilt and the character of the *Romish Clergy*, ever since their *corruptions* came to a considerable height, and the *Spirit of Persecution* first begun to reign among 'em. O what Torrents of righteous and innocent blood have they shed for above 6 Centurys together, far beyond

yond what was ever fled by *Rome Pagan* in all her most furious Persecutions !

In order to our taking a brief View of this their Guilt, We must begin with those *eminent Professors of uncorrupted Christianity*, who during the *11th, 12th, and 13th, and 14th Centurys* so early oppos'd the growing and scandalous corruptions of the *Roman Clergy and Church*, and were known in *Italy* under the Name of *Paterines* and *Cathari* ; In *Piedmont* under the Names of *Vallenses*, not from *Waldo of Lyons* (for they were known by that Name before he ever appear'd) But from the *Valleys* they inhabited ; In the lower part of *France* under the Name of *Albigenses* from the City of *Alby*, of *Petro-brussians* and *Hemicians* from *Peter* and *Henry Bruis*, two eminent Preachers among 'em, and *Waldenses* or the *poor of Lyons*, from *Waldo* a Citizen of *Lyons*, and from the *Poverty* they profess in opposition to the excessive *Wealth* of the *Romish Clergy* ; In *England* they were call'd *Lollards*, and afterwards *Wicelists* from two eminent Leaders they follow'd. In other places, They were call'd *Picards* from some of 'em settling in *Picardy*. (Not to mention the Names of *Passagieri* and *Turlapins*,
given

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given 'em from their fleeing from one place to another, and being often forc't to take up in those desolate places that seem'd rather fit for the habitation of *Wolves* than of *Men*.)

Against these sincere Professors of the uncorrupted Gospel of Christ, The *Roman Bishop and Clergy* soon began to bend their furious Zeal.

Pope Alexander the 3d begun with Cur-sing *Valdo of Lions* and all his *Adherents*. And afterwards at the Council of *Tours* in *France*, decreed, *That they and all their Favourers shou'd be excommunicated, and that none shou'd buy of 'em or sell 'em any thing*. As if he intended a literal Accomplishment of what was foretold, *xiii Rev. 17*.

Pope Lucius the 3d in the same 12th Century denounc't his *Anathema* against 'em, and decreed them to be left to the secular Judge to be punish't, and threaten'd all Civil Magistrates, that were negligent in punishing 'em with *Excommunication*.

Pursuant to these Decrees *Ildephonsus* the King of *Arragon*, publish't a cruel E-dict against 'em, exposing 'em to the usual punishment of *Traytors*.

But *Pope Innocent the 3d* was their most inveterate Enemy. To his Contrivance that

that *Tribunal of the Inquisition* owes its first Original, which has for so many Ages become so infamous for monstrous *arbitrary Injustice* and for *inhuman Cruelty*. (Tho it receiv'd not its present Form and Establishment till the Popedom of *Gregory the 9th.*) 'Tis he employ'd *Dominick* and those of his Order in that *hellish Office*; and it was by the restless diligence of these busy *Inquisitors* that so many thousands of the innocent Servants of Christ were deliver'd over to the secular Power; The *Magistrates* thro' the dread of *Papal Excommunication* becoming the tame *Executioners* of the Clergy's unjust sentence.

And yet because the *Inquisitors* made not so quick dispatch in their Endeavours to extirpate these pretended *Hereticks* as this Pope desir'd, He found out a more expeditious way to destroy 'em in the lower part of *France* where he found they were greatly spreading themselves. To that end, He rais'd several *Croisados* against 'em, sending his *Legate* to command 'em, whom the *Popish Clergy* assisted by animating the blind Bigotts of their Party to take up Arms under the banner of the Cross for exterminating these *Hereticks*, and to encourage

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rage 'em the more in that good Work, he promis'd 'em the same *Privileges* that had been granted to those that took up arms to recover the *Holy Land*, (*i. e.* full *Remission of their Sins*, and if they dyed in the *Cause an immediate Entrance into Heaven*.) And upon this Encouragement those *Cut-throats* flock't in so fast as to amount to the Number sometimes of above an 100000 and once to 500000. And tho' they did not always meet with equal success either under the *Legate* or under *Simon Earl of Montfort*, (who was their General afterwards) Yet *P. Perionius a Popish Historian*, confesses, that above a million of these poor People in France alone were slain in these holy Wars rais'd against 'em. What the Spirit of that Pope himself was, appears from the *Decrees* of the *Council of Lateran* under him, that orders the *deposing all Temporal Lords that do not exterminate all Hereticks out of their Dominions*. And how conformable the Disposition of his *Legate* that commanded the fore-mention'd *Croisados* was to his, we may see by one remarkable Instance of his flaming Zeal, That at the storming the Town of *Beziers* he gave strict orders to *spare none*, And when he was told, There were many good Catholicks among

among 'em, he refus'd to recall his orders, but cry'd out, *Kill 'em all. The Lord knows who are his.* And thus in that one City were 60000 murder'd.

It wou'd require more time then I can now employ, to shew, How *Papal Fury* follow'd these poor People whom these violences dispers't into *Germany, Bohemia, Flanders, England, Calabria, Piedmont,* and other places, destroying about a million more of 'em. I shall only observe, That the *Court of Rome* was restless in Solliciting the Assistance of *Princes*, and of the *Secular Power* to extirpate 'em (from many of whom they obtain'd such barbarous Edicts as that of *Frederick 2d the Emperor of Germany*) That they did often engage *Princes* in horrible Acts of cruelty against their innocent Subjects, (As besides the Persecution of those in *Bohemia*, we may see in the monstrous butchery acted under *Lewis the 12th*, against the Inhabitants of *Cabrieres & Merindol.*) That the *Arch-Bishops* and *Bishops* in Communion with that *See* were generally Zealous to Second the *Pope's* Intentions; And above all, The *Monks* and *Fryars* were every where the busy *Incendiarys* to raise the fury of the blind Rabble against these faith-

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faithful Servants of Christ. In a word, Wherever these poor People were dispers't, The malignant Zeal of the *Roman Bishops* follow'd 'em; And had all *Secular Princes* been as devoid of humanity and compassion as they were, These eminent Witnesses of the Truth of Christ had been entirely cut off from the face of the Earth. But that Providence of God that suffer'd their Dispersion into so many parts of *Europe*, provided some shelter for 'em; And a Remnant of 'em was preserv'd to be the Seed of that more glorious and general Reformation that broke out in the beginning of the 16th Century.

And now if you ask, What had these poor People done to excite all this Storm of *Papal Fury* against 'em, The *Roman Bishops and Clergy* will tell you, They were *Hereticks*. But if you ask, What *Heresies* they were chargable with, I will give you a brief account of it, and that from unsuspected Witnesses, Even from those *Inquisitors* employ'd to extirpate 'em, or from others that were their avowed *Enemies*.

And I may justly mention *Reynerius the Inquisitor*, famous Testimony concerning 'em, Who tells us, *This Sect of*
C the

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the *Erasmists*, (another Name for these Professors of the Truth) was most dangerous on 3 accounts, The first is, Their long-continuance; some say from the days of Pope Sylvester, others from the very apostles themselves. The second is, The vast Extent of it thro' so many parts of Europe, The third is, That this Sect had a great shew of Piety, liv'd justly before Men, believ'd all the Articles contain'd in the Apostles Creed, Only they blasphem'd the Roman Church and Clergy, They reject'd their Sacraments and Saints, and other Customs or Rites of the Church.

To this Testimony, I may add that of *Claudius Seisselius*, Arch-Bishop of Turin, who after a particular account of their Doctrine (very conformable in the main to that of the Reformed Churches, and opposite to the Papal Supremacy, Invocation of Saints, Purgatory, Transubstantiation, &c) concludes it with this character of em, That setting aside what they held in opposition to the Romish Faith and Religion (i. e. what the Romish Church has superadded to Christianity) They did for the most part lead a more pure Life then other Christians. That they swore not except fore't to it, seldom took the Name of God in vain, honestly perform'd their promises, &c. Even the

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the most inveterate *Papish* Historians own a great Resemblance between their Doctrines and that of the present *Prot. Churches* (and our own have clearly demonstrated it from those *Papish* Historians that give us the truest account of their opinions.) So that I shall only subjoyn the Testimony of that celebrated Historian *Ihuanus*, Who tells us, "That the true Cause of the War undertaken against the *Waldenses* was, That they abhor'd the *Antichristianism*, the *Tyranny* and *Errors* of the See of *Rome*, and by the true preaching of the Gospel endeavour'd to withdraw the People from their obedience to it. And to the like Effect speaks *Jul. Paradinus*, and *Bern. Girardus*.

And indeed there needed no other Crimes then these to expose these innocent *Lambs of Christ* to the rage of the *Roman Wolves*, and make 'em greedy of sucking their blood. They bore a faithful Testimony against their gross corruptions and Errors by the purity of their Doctrine, Against their *Usurpation* and *Tyranny* by casting off their unjust *Yoke*, and against their abominable *Wickedness* of all kinds by their Exemplary *humility* and *Holiness*. And this was an Offence not to be forgiven by the See of *Rome* and it's sworn
C 2 Vassals,

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Vassals, whom their secular Interest and
 grandure oblig'd to maintain these cor-
 ruptions, and to oppose such an unwe-
 come Reformation.

Upon the whole, We have as Satis-
 factory Evidence as can be desir'd, That
 these Professors of the Truth were the
 most eminent *Lights of the Age* wherein
 they liv'd for *purity of Doctrine*, and their
 Adversarys themselves are forc't to own
 the *Exemplary Holiness of their Lives*. And
 we are sure Our *B. Saviour* will not dis-
 own his faithful *Disciples*, because others
 unjustly brand 'em as *Hereticks*. He will
 not cast 'em out of his *Communion*, because
 his pretended *Vicars* have denounc't
 their *Anathema's* against 'em. He sees and
 will approve his own *Image* shining in
 'em, whatever *false colours* their bloody
 persecutors have endeavour'd to paint
 'em with. Nay he will regard all their
 Enemy's *unjust Calumnys* as an Addition
 to their *barbarous Crueltys*; And will
 charge upon 'em the guilt of their infam-
 ous *Lyes* against his innocent Servants,
 as well as inhuman *Murders* of 'em.

Having given this brief hint of the
Persecutions rais'd against these Early
 Witnesses of the Truth of Christ, in op-
 position to the *Romish Corruptions*, I shall

not

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not Enlarge on those they have rais'd during these *two last Centurys*, since the Light of the Reformation so clearly broke out. They are too well known to need a particular Enumeration. And therefore I shall content my self with a few Instances, but sufficient to shew, That the *Spirit of Persecution* that begun in the *Papal See* in the 12th Century, was not *extinguish'd* but *inflam'd* to a greater height during the 16th and 17th.

The *Number* of those whose blood has been shed under the *Forms of Law and Justice* is amazingly great. As little noise as that merciless *Tribunal of the Inquisition* makes at present, It did in the beginning of the Reformation so vigorously bestir it self, that *Vergerius* (who had good opportunity to know it when imploy'd as an *Agent* for the *See of Rome*,) confesses, *That it had in about 30 years space destroy'd 150000 Persons*. I shall not insist on the flames that *Papal Zeal* kindled in *England*, and most other places of *Europe* where the *Prot. Religion* had not the Protection of the *Civil Power* to shelter 'em from *Papal Fury*. They have furnish'd most Nations around us with a large *Book of their own Martyrs*.

I shall rather take notice, That the *See*

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of Rome never scrupled to Encourage the
most *illegal* violences in order to the sup-
pression of what they call *Heresie*, but
have hallow'd the most *inhuman* Massacres
when acted to propagate what they call
the *Catholic Faith*. I might to this pur-
pose, instance in 36000 which the D.
of *Alva* boasted he had destroy'd in the
Low-Countries. The *Massacre* in *Paris* and
other parts of *France* under *Charles the*
9th consum'd about 80000. And that
acted in this *Kingdom* destroy'd near
200000. And 'tis but 18 years since the
present *French King* contrary to all pub-
lick Faith dragg'd his own innocent
Prot. Subjects, forc't many of 'em by
variety of *inhuman* barbaritys to *abjure*
their Religion, condemn'd those that per-
sever'd to the *Prisons* or *Gallies*, ras'd all
their *Temples*, reduc'd above 800 flour-
ishing *Churches* to deplorable desolation,
banish't their faithful *Pasters*, suppress'd all
Publick Exercise of their Religion, and
expos'd such as in the *Cevennes* kept up
their *Religious Assemblys* to all the rigour
of military Execution, forcing 'em at
last to take up Arms in their own De-
fence.

And that the guilt of all this is most
justly chargable on the *See of Rome*, is
from

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from hence evident, That they have either been the first *Advisers* to, or at least the *Approvers* and *Encouragers* of all these Acts of Barbarity. It was *Pope Gregory the 13th* that upon the welcome News of the *Massacre of Paris*, call'd the *Cardinals* together to thank God for so great a *Blessing* conferr'd on the *Roman See*, and publish'd a *Jubilee* to give thanks to God for destroying in France the *Enemies of the Truth and of the Church*. And yet what the *Pope* thus applauded was so monstrous a *Complication of Treachery and Cruelty*, that the *Popish Historians* themselves, who have any spark of honour or honesty, cannot mention it without *abhorrence*, and speak of that as a *scandal to their Nation and Religion*, which the *Court of Rome* celebrates as a *Meritorious Service to God and the Church*. And for the infamous *Massacre of Ireland*, It was *Pope Urban the 8th* that encourag'd and animated the bloody actors of it to persist in so good a work, by promising to all that ventur'd their Lives in it, *absolution from all sins, Transgressions, and Crimes how heinous and atrocious soever*. Strange! That the *shedding of innocent blood* (which we reckon a sin of the deepest dye) shou'd in the opinion of the *Roman Popes*, be an action

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action so meritorious, as to be capable of expiating the foulest crimes, and washing those white as snow, whose sins were as Scarlet and Crimson before. And for what the French King has done in order to the Suppression of the Reformed Religion in France, was not only done at the earnest Sollicitation of the Popish Clergy, but his Zeal herein was applauded by Pope Innocent the 11th, who express the great satisfaction he had in seeing this pestilent Heresy thus extirpated in France, And tells that Prince he had acquir'd Immortal Praises thereby. Nay his Clergy have ever since in their fulsom Panegyricks to that ambitious Prince celebrated this Atchievement of his, as the Principal Glory of his Reign. And that the present Pope Clement the 7th has given his Approbation to all this unrighteous, perfidious, and cruel Treatment of these innocent Sufferers, I shall have occasion under the next head to observe.

And now can there be a more notorious Instance of vile Hypocrisy then this? For those that pretend so Excessive Veneration for Primitive Martyrs and Saints, not only to hate and reproach those in their own Age, that maintain the very same Doctrine, and most of 'em recom-
mend

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commend by the same blameless and remarkable Purity of Life, but to prosecute 'em with fire and sword, and endeavour their utter Extirpation, either by procuring and Executing Sanguinary Laws, or (where that fails) by perfidious violence, and furious Massacres?

And let not the Romish Clergy think that the Affixing the odious Name of *Hereticks* on these Righteous Persons, whose blood they thus prodigally shed, will free 'em from this charge of *Hypocrisy*, and from the guilt of *Persecution*. For then might the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* vindicate themselves from our Saviour's charge here, since they prosecuted himself as a *Deceiver* and *Blasphemer*, and fix'd this character of *Heresy* upon his holy Religion, and the Professors of it. See 24 Acts 14 v. 'Tis not in the power of opprobrious Names to change the Nature of things. Our Lord will own his Truth, tho' Men call it *Heresy*. And he will know his Sheep, tho' those call 'em *Ravening Wolves*, to whom that Name do's more justly belong. So that we are as sure, That the *Romish Clergy* are guilty of this detestable *Hypocrisy*, as we are sure, That the *Reformed Religion* is the *Doctrine of the Gospel*, and that many of these

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these Sufferers for it were Persons of eminent Piety and Holiness.

I come then, U. To shew, How applicable this Threatning which our Saviour here denounces against the Scribes and Pharisees, is to the Roman Pope and Clergy.

And to that purpose, I need only observe, That as their Persecutions have beyond all comparison exceeded all that was done by the Jews in cruelty and rage, So the same Spirit of Persecution has reign'd among 'em for about 5 or 600 years together. And there is one thing in which they have far outdone these Scribes and Pharisees in my Text. They indeed condemn'd the Injustice and Cruelty of their Fathers, and said, If they had liv'd in their days, they wou'd not have been partakers with 'em in the Blood of the Prophets; But the Romish Clergy are so far from condemning what their Predecessors have done of this kind, that on the contrary they openly applaud what they have done, and by commending as well as imitating their Example, evidently draw the guilt thereof upon their own Heads. I have already shewn, How the Roman Popes have made themselves accessory to the blood shed by their most violent Bigotts

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gott in the most savage Massacres, by their
loud Encomiums bellow'd on the bloody
actors. But we have in this Age a most
remarkable Instance of what I am now
asserting in the furious Bull publish'd by
the present Pope Clement the 12th against
the Protestants of the Cevennes. He there
"calls 'em the Cursed Remainers of the old
"Albigenses. He tells us, He hop't this ter-
"rible pestilence had been long ago Extin-
"guish'd by the Piety of Lewis the Great. So
that in the Pope's dialect, The French Mo-
narch's violating his publick Edicts, Let-
ting loose his brutish Soldiers to exer-
cise their savage barbaritys on his inno-
cent Subjects, and violent Endeavors to
cut off their Name and Memorial, are so
many eminent acts of Piety towards God.
But sure this is such Piety as our B. Lord
speaks of when he tells us, That the time
"shou'd come when his Disciples shou'd not on-
"ly be cast out of Synagogues (i. e. Excom-
municated) but even that those who kill'd
'em shou'd think they did God service, 16
John 1. Well! but to reanimate the pi-
ous Zeal of Lewis the Great, The Pope
"tells us, That he has thought fit to imitate
"the laudable examples of his Predecessors in
"the like Cases. And the better to encourage
"and excite the Minds of the faithful to ex-
"terminate

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" terminate this Rabble of Miscreants, who in
 " all Ages of the world have been equally odi-
 " ous to God & to Cesar, he has in pursuance
 " of the power of binding and loosing where-
 " with our B. Lord has invested his chief A-
 " postle, freely and voluntarily granted to all
 " those that engage in so holy a warfare in
 " case they shou'd fall in battle, a plenary Re-
 " mission of sins whatever they are.

Here we manifestly see that notwith-
 standing all that has been written to vin-
 dicate the *Innocence* of those Ancient Pro-
 fessors of the Gospel, and to demonstrate
 the *Injustice* and *Cruelty* of their Persecu-
 tors, The present See of Rome is so far
 from condemning what their Predecessors
 have done, that they applaud all their
 barbarous crueltys, and propose 'em as
 laudable Patterns for their Imitation. Nay
 they openly Avow, That the destroying of
 Hereticks is still so meritorious an Action
 in their Judgment as to expiate all other
 Crimes, and entitle all those that dye in
 this Papal War (how profligate Sinners
 soever they have formerly been) to a ple-
 nary Absolution of all Sins whatever they are.

And what cou'd the See of Rome do more
 than this, to make themselves Accessarys
 to all the Villanys and Murders their Pre-
 decessors have been guilty of? What cou'd
 they

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they do more to bring *all the righteous Blood shed for these 5 or 600 years since the first Persecution rais'd against these Albigenſes on their own heads?* If our Lord told the Scribes and Pharisees, *That all the blood shed on the Earth, &c. shou'd come on that generation, because they persisted to imitate the Example of their Fathers, tho' in words they disavow'd and condemn'd it;* How much more with *all the innocent Blood of those faithful Professors of the uncorrupted Gospel of Christ shed in such plentiful streams for so many Ages, come upon the Papal Hierarchy, when they not only imitate but celebrate the Examples of their persecuting Predecessors, and even glory in following their steps in the worst Instances of their malignant Cruelty?* Strange blindness and obduraey of Mind! That those *Earthquakes* that Rome had so lately felt shou'd raise no convulsions in the Consciences of it's Pope and Cardinals, and never once remind'em of the *guilt of righteous blood* that has so long lain upon'em! That in the very face of such monitory Judgments they shou'd persist in the same *spirit of persecution*, and when themselves were threaten'd with the *Vengeance of God from Heaven* shou'd express such a furious Zeal

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Zeal for the extirpation of a poor innocent People from the face of the Earth, from whom they have received no other provocation than that they will not sacrifice their Consciences and Religion to the Will of their Persecutors, or tamely stand still to have their throats cut for refusing it! What is there not yet blood enough on the Scarlet Robes of their Popes and Cardinals, that they are solicitous to dip them yet deeper in it! But this is the most compendious way to fill up the measure of their Predecessor's guilt. But thus was it foretold, That in Rome Papal should be found the Blood of Prophets, and of Saints, and of all that were slain on the Earth. 18 Rev. ult.

And we may also see how forward the Popish Clergy are to conspire with the See of Rome in this heinous guilt. No sooner does the Bishop of Nismes receive the Pope's Bull, but he immediately issues out his circular Letters to his Clergy, and in obedience to the Commands of his holy Father the Pope, and of his most godly Prince Lewis the 14th (as he styles him) enjoyns all his Clergy in the bowels of Christ to warn all their Flocks against giving the least entertainment or succour to these Protestants, and to excite 'em to cut 'em off by the Sword.

And

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And to this purpose he recomman'ds to
em the Priviledges promis't in the Popes
Bull, and the Example of Lewis the Great,
who (saith he) by the Advice of his Hol-
iness and the Bishops of his Realm has whole-
somy determin'd not to leave one Heretick
alive in his Dominions. And is not this
the genuin Language of such Hypocrites
as our Saviour describes, To beseech men by
the bowels of Christ, not to succour but de-
stroy such as profess his true Religion, and
have taken up arms only in their own ne-
cessary defence, and not till after long ex-
ercise of their patience, under the most
barbarous Treatment; not till the Court
of France had rejected all their com-
plaints; Not till they were cast out of
the Royal Protection, and abandon'd as if
they had been so many Beasts of Prey to
such as had a mind to destroy 'em; Not
till they were reduc't to the last ex-
tremitys, and had the grand Law of
self-preservation against Cut-throats and
Murderers to justify their Arms. And
yet these are the poor innocent
Flock of Christ, for whose blood the
Roman Wolves so earnestly thirst. And
shall we scruple to call 'em Wolves, be-
cause of their Sheeps-clothing when we see
their bloody Jaws, and hear 'em yelling for
the

the prey? When our Saviour has given us such a mark to distinguish 'em by, telling us, *By their fruits we shall know 'em.* 17 *Matt. 20.*

You see then, How evidently the Blood of some *millions* of Christ's faithful Servants lies at the door of the *Papal Hierarchy*; And how openly they *avow* and *glory* in *shedding* of it. I will not indeed presume positively to say, *That it will be requir'd of this generation*; But I think I may safely affirm, *It will be requir'd and most terribly aveng'd.* I am sure I may commend those awful Words of our B. Lord to their consideration, *Ye Serpents, ye generation of Vipers, How can ye escape the Damnation of Hell?* And I cannot think it altogether improbable, That the time is hatching when a provoked God will *avenge the blood of his Servants at the hand of Rome (Papal), that Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth, which has thus made her self drunk with the blood of the Saints and Martyrs of Jesus.* This open *Justification* of their *persecuting Cruelty* in the face of the World in such an Age of Light as this, seems to be a comfortable *Omen* that the *Time* is not far off. And who knows but that as these *Albigenses* were the first, so their

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their Successors the *Sevannois* shall be the last that shall feel the effects of *Rome's* blood-thirsty malignity!

It now remains, That we make some practical Reflections upon the foregoing Discourse. And

I. It may serve to establish us in the *Reformed Religion* to see such evident characters of an *Antichristian Spirit* in the *Enemys* and *Opposers* of it.

Idolatry and *Persecuting Cruelty* are the two grand characters of *Mystical Babylon*, which we are told was the City which (in *St. John's* time) reigned over the *Kings* of the *Earth*, which all know to be *Rome*. That it is not meant of *Rome Pagan*, besides manifold other Arguments that may be suggested from the 17th ch. of *Revelations*, There are two Arguments that I think carry sufficient demonstration with 'em, The one is, That that City of *Rome* shou'd then become the *Mother of Fornications*, and shed those *Torrents of Blood*, when it shou'd be divided into ten *Kingdoms*, But this division of the *Roman Empire* happen'd not, till after *Rome* had embrac't the *Christian Faith*. And these ten *Kings* were to receive their power at the same hour with the *Beast*, (i. e. The *Roman*

D.

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Empire as become Idolatrous and Persecuting). The other is, That when St. John saw Rome thus become the Mother of *Fornications and Abominations of the Earth, and drunk with the blood of Saints*, he wonder'd with great *Admiration*. But what ground cou'd there be for such *Astonishment* and wonder, to see Rome Pagan involv'd in *Idolatry*, and persecuting the *Christian Church*. *Idolatry* was the Religion of their *Ancestors*; and 'tis no wonder at all, that it shou'd prompt 'em to be *Enemies* of those that came to overturn their *Altars*, and to draw the world from their *Establish'd Worship*. But it might well appear amazing to St. John, and matter of great admiration, To see the *Gentile-Idolatry* readvanc't by Rome *Christian and Papal*, and to behold her *shedding the blood* of those that adher'd to the *uncorrupted Gospel* of Christ in far greater streams than Rome Pagan had ever done before.

And truly It appears to me, very remarkable and worthy of our *Observation*, that at the Time when this persecuting spirit first appear'd in the *Papal See*, These *Albigenses* and *Waldenses*, these early Witnesses of the Truth of Christ,

did

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did generally conspire in condemning Rome as that mystical Babylon describ'd in the Revelations of St. John. And 'tis observable, That they ground'd their Opinion on these 3 characters, The Idolatry they perceiv'd then growing apace in the Romish Church, The Encroachments of the Papal Power on Temporal Princes, who by a tame submission to the Papal Authority gave their Power to the Beast, and became his *Lictors* to execute his bloody persecuting Decrees. And the Spirit of Tyranny and Persecution which they then begun to feel, and of which they found the See of Rome to be the Source and Spring.

Nay there were some found in the Communion of the Romish Church it self that fix'd this character on the See and Court of Rome. And many of them particularly insisted on Persecution and Cruelty as the character of Antichrist. The words of Rupertus Abbot of Tuits are so remarkable to this purpose, that I think 'em worthy of Recital. For in his Commentary on the 13 Rev. 15. Where we read, That the 2^d Beast gave Life to the Image of the first Beast, that it shou'd both speak, and cause as many as

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wou'd not worship the Image of the Beast
shou'd be kill'd, he makes this just Re-
mark. " That Christ does not so, Neither
" his Prophets and Apostles teach so; Nor
" have Christian Kings receiv'd any such
" Instructions to kill Men, or to make
" 'em think, The Worship of Christ is to
" be stain'd with blood, For the true
" God does not desire any forced but vo-
" luntary service. Wherefore by this mark
" especially, he (i. e. the Beast spoken
" of) will make it evident to all that
" have any Understanding, That indeed
" he is the Antichrist, That he is not
" Christ, but according to his Name, op-
" posite and contrary to him. He is Christ
" that sheds his own blood, He is Anti-
" christ that sheds the blood of others.
" And truly This character is so just and
so conformable to the Holy Scriptures,
that methinks we cannot View the
Papacy in this glass without obser-
ving the marks of Antichristianism in
it. Let us but behold the See of Rome
establishing so gross Idolatrys and Super-
stitions by their Authority and Influ-
ence; And propagating 'em by such a
series of persecutions and crueltys. Let
us behold her in her Inquisition Tribunals
with

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with her *Racks* and *Strappado's*, with her *Wheels* and *Gibbets*, with her *Fire* and *Faggott*, Let us view her raising her *Crossado's*, and inspiring blind *Cut-throats* and *Dragoons* with rage and savage barbarity against all those whom she is pleas'd to call *Hereticks*, and prosecuting their utter Extirpation with *Fire and Sword*; Let's see her breathing out *Destruction to the Bodys*, and uncharitable *Sentences of Damnation against the Souls of all* that dissent from her grossest corruptions; Let us behold her triumphing in the ruin of oppressed Innocents, and rejoycing over the slain *Witnesses of Christ*, and even glutted with their righteous Blood, And sure we can discern in her no marks of the Dove-like chaste and innocent Spouse of Christ, no resemblance to that merciful Saviour who came not to destroy the Lives of Men but to save 'em, and who rebuk'd the irregular Zeal of his Disciples when they call'd for fire from Heaven against the inhospitable Samaritans, Nay who (as the Abbot of Tuits well observ'd) came to shed his own blood, not that of others. But we are sure that Rome Papal when it appears in these

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true but hideous colours do's bear a great and manifest Resemblance to that Beast that was to make War with the Saints and to overcome em. 13 Rev. 7. And to that mystical Babylon that is the Mother of Fornication, &c. and was drunk with the blood of Saints and Martyrs. 17 Rev. 5.

And so confident were the poor Albigenses of the Truth hereof, that 'tis observable, When Simon Earl of Montfort had made a great slaughter of 'em, and the Arch-Bishop of Thoulouse interceded for those that surviv'd on Condition of their embracing the Roman Faith, they boldly refus'd, sending the Arch-Bishop word, That they were the conquer'd Servants of Christ, whom the Beast mention'd. 13 Rev. 7. Shou'd make War with and overcome, and from the support they derived from this Prophecy, They freely sacrific'd their Lives to the Cause of Christ.

H. We may hence learn a just Abhorrence of a Spirit of Persecution, and the Vanity of the Pretences us'd to cover or palliate it.

We are sure, Nothing is more opposite to the merciful genius of the Christian Institution, or the Spirit of its blessed

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bleſſed Author. *Chriſt's Kingdom is a Kingdom of Light* ; And Men are to be drawn into it by the Evidence of divine Truth propos'd to their underſtandings, and by the hands of a Man, even by the cords of Love. *Chriſt's People* are to be a willing People in the day of his power, captivated by the ſweet and Sovereign efficacy of his Grace ; not drag'd to his altars againſt their own Conſent, or forc't into his ſervice by violence and ſavage cruelty. 'Tis the *Devil's Kingdom of Darkneſs* that requires to be propagated by force and blood. 'Tis his Cauſe that muſt be ſupported by Lying and Murder. 'Tis the character of the *Beaſt* to cauſe thoſe that worſhip not his Image to be kill'd, and to forbid all to buy or ſell that have not his mark and ſtamp upon 'em. 13 Rev. 15, 16, 17. It belongs to *Antichriſt* to employ *Dra-goons* for *Miſſionarys*, to convince Men's Underſtandings by *Racks* and *Wheels*, and to proſelyte 'em to his Cauſe by the Terror of *military Execution*. Our Lord allows not his Diſciples to call down for fire from *Heaven* againſt thoſe that reſuſe to receive him ; Much leſs to fetch fire from *Hell*, to conſume and devour 'em.

And therefore no pretence of *Heresy* will ever justify such *Acts of Violence* and *Inhumanity*, such *methods of force* and *compulsion*. And much less will a blind and unrighteous charge of *Heresy* be any *Apology* for those that persecute the sincere Professors of the uncorrupted Gospel of our B. Saviour. The like Pretences neither clear'd those that murder'd the *Prophets* of old, nor those that shed the *blood of Christ*, and of his *faithful Followers*; And much less will it vindicate those that act the same *Wickedness* under a *Christian Name*, and pretend to propagate the *Faith of Christ* with the *Devil's Arms*.

III. We may hence learn to commiserate those that are expos'd to the persecuting Rage of such Hypocrites.

And this is the Case of the *Protestants in France*, and particularly of our *Brethren in the Cevennes*. And sure what I have already represented shou'd recommend 'em to our *pity* and our *Prayers*. Their *Declaration* is a noble Defence of their cause, and sufficient to justify the Innocence of their conduct to all impartial Judges. Let us then commend their Cause to the great God, and themselves

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selves to his merciful Protection and Defence. Tho' the 10 Kings (we are told) shou'd give their power to the Beast, and for a long Time the Saints shou'd be overcome, Yet we are assur'd the Lamb shou'd overcome 'em at last by his faithful and chosen ones. 17 Rev. 14. And even those Kings that had so long tamely put their Necks under the Papal Yoke, shou'd at last shake it off. See v. 16. How far God may honour these oppressed Servants of his (how despicable soever in human appearance) to accomplish his own just and gracious purposes, is what we can neither foresee or determine. But we have reason to sympathize with 'em in their sufferings and dangers, and to implore an happy issue of their necessary attempts of self-preservation.

IV. We may hence Encourage our Faith in all the predictions of Scripture, concerning the downfall of mystical Babylon.

We see the guilt of persecution and blood, impenitently persisted in will draw down destructive Vengeance at last. There is a Time when God will judge that great Whore that hath corrupted the Earth with her Fornication, and will avenge the

the blood of his Servants at her hand; When Heaven, and the *Hl. Apostles* and *Prophets* shall rejoyce over her, and applaud the true and righteous Judgments of God in her final ruin. May we therefore exercise the *Faith* and *Patience* of the *Saints* in waiting for the fulfilling of divine predictions. I can never think that the *Papal Hierarchy* will long escape the destructive Judgments of God after all they have done towards filling up the measure of their Guilt. And when that is once full, The *Vials* of divine Wrath will soon be pour'd out. *Mystical Babylon* is represented as fearless and secure when her *Final Overthrow* was just coming upon her. And therefore our Faith shou'd not be stagger'd at the continued *Prosperity* of *Rome-Papal*, which will be no Protection to her, when the Time of her Vengeance is come, when her sins have reach'd up to the Heavens, and God shall remember her Iniquitys. And when she saith, I sitt as a Queen, and am no Widow, and shall see no Sorrow, Then shall her Plagues come in one day Death and Mourning and Famine. And she shall be utterly burnt with Fire. For strong is the Lord God that judgeth her. xviii Rev. 6, 8, 8. V. We

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V. We may hence be excited to adore the singular Goodness of God that has so long preserv'd us from the *Persecuting Cruelty* of such *Hypocrites* as these.

'Twas owing to the marvellous Interposál of his gracious Providence that any bounds were sett to the raging waves that had overflown the rest of this Kingdom; And that a few *Protestants* were preserv'd in this City as the *Seed* of a more *Numerous Race*. 'Twas the mercy of God that they were not given as a *Prey* to the *Teeth* of our *Enemies*, but escap't as a *Bird* out of the *Fowler's Snare*. cxxiv Ps. 6. 7. Nor shou'd we be insensible of the great dangers we have since been deliver'd from. The remembrance of our once *dismal prospect* and *awful fears*, shou'd affect us with the contemplation of our *marvellous deliverance*, with which we were mercinully surpriz'd, when our *Enemies* hopes were so high, and we even at the *brink of despair*. And to that *deliverance* we owe it, That we our selves have only heard of *Papal Crueltys* without feeling 'em; That we see not those *flames* kindled again in which so many of

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of our *Ancestors* were offer'd up as a *Sacrifice to Papal Fury*; That we are not encompass't with *Missionarys* and *Dragoons* sent to convert us to the *Romish Faith*; Nor deliver'd into the hands *brutish Men skilfull to destroy*. O may our *Gratitude and Praise* be answerable to the distinguishing *Mercy of God* in his dealings with us while this has been the sad *Lot of our Brethren elsewhere*! May we express that gratitude by a diligent *Improvement of that Reformed Religion* which we enjoy so free a profession of! May *these Churches of ours* that enjoy that *External Rest*, walk in the fear of the *Lord*, and comforts of his *H. Spirit* in order to their being edify'd and multiply'd. And then we may hope that our *Prayers* may prevail, not only for the continued *Protection of God* over our selves, but for the *Revival of his oppressed Cause and Interest in the World*.

3 N O 6 3

F I N I S.

A
Christian
THE
Temple of God,
From 1 Cor. III. 16, 17. v.

A.
SERMON
PREACH'D
Febr. 23^d 1706⁶₇.

By J. B.

DUBLIN,
Printed for the use of the Author,
1707.

A

A Sermon

1. Cor. 15. 17.

is the Temple of God

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A Sermon, &c.

I. Cor. III. ch. 16, 17 v.

16. Know ye not, That ye are the Temple of God, And that the Spirit of God dwells in you.

17. If any Man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the Temple of God is holy, which Temple ye are.

THere is no need to detain you from the consideration of the Words themselves by any Explication of the Context. The Apostle *Paul* do's in 'em propose an important Truth to us which he supposes every sincere Christian wou'd at the first view assent to and own, viz. That he is a living Temple unto God, thro' the (stated) inhabitation of his *H. Spirit*. From whence he takes occasion to caution 'em against doing any thing

4 *A True Christian the*

thing that might *defile* God's holy Temple, and thereby expose us to his destructive Vengeance.

I shall therefore from the words chiefly insist on the *Truth* here asserted in the *Doctrinal Part*, and on the *Caution* subjoyn'd as one Branch of the *Application*.

The Important Truth which I wou'd explain is,

That every true Christian is the Temple of God.

In order to the *Illustration* of this Excellent Truth, I shall briefly consider:

I. What is here *presuppos'd* in this Assertion of the Apostle, *viz. That every true Christian is the Temple of God.*

II. What is more directly *imply'd* and *included* in it; Or In what sense and On what accounts a true Christian is said to be *God's Temple*.

And then I shall apply the whole.

And,

I. Let us consider, What is here *presuppos'd* in this Assertion of the Apostle, *That every true Christian is the Living Temple of God.*

Now this Assertion presupposes such necessary Truths as these.

I. *That*

Living Temple of God.

9

1. *That there is a God that made us to whom all Worship and Homage is due from his reasonable Creatures.*

The very Notion of a *Temple* supposes a *Deity* to whose service and use 'tis dedicated, and who is to be worshipped in it. Our being a *Spiritual Temple* to God, do's therefore presuppose, That there is such a necessary and infinitely perfect Being, who is the *Maker*, the *Owner*, the *Ruler*, and *Benefactor* of this World, and of all those reasonable Creatures that are the *Inhabitants* of it; From whom we in particular have deriv'd our Being and Life, and to whom therefore we owe the highest Veneration and Respect, the utmost Obedience and Service, both on the account of his *adorable Perfections*, and of his *Supreme Authority and Dominion*. Were there no such all-perfect Being, Or were we under no such Dependence on him, and obligations to him for our Being, and for all that we *have* and *are* and *hope for*, There were no occasion for such a thing as the *Erection* of a *Temple*, and for the *Devotion* that shou'd be pay'd to him there.

2. This Assertion farther supposes, *That this B. God is both capable and willing to maintain a gracious Intercourse with us as his sincere Worshippers.*

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It supposes, That he is possess'd of those adorable *Perfections* that render him capable of such *Converse* with us. Such as his *Immensity* and *Omnipresence* on the account whereof *he is not far from any of us; since in him we live and move and have our Being,* 17 Acts 27, 28. Nay he is as *near* to us as we are to our selves, so that we may *every where lift up holy hands to him*, and are every where sure of his essential presence with us, and consequently of his capacity to maintain a gracious *Intercourse* and *Communion* with us.

Again, His *Omniscience* assures us, That he who is every where present with us do's always *behold* us wherever we are and whatever we do, and consequently takes notice of all the *homage* and *service* we present to him; Nay this *Perfection* assures us, That he not only observes our *External Acts* of *Devotion*, but that he even penetrates into our *Hearts*, and inspects all those hidden *Motions* of our *Souls*, those internal *Acts* of *Reverence*, of *Love*, of *Faith*, &c. which are the *Life* and *Soul* of all Religious *Worship*.

Again, His *All-sufficiency* assures us, That as he do's behold, so he can liberally recompense all our sincere *Devo-*
tions

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tions and Services. So that we have all possible Encouragement to pay this Tribute of our Homage and Devotion to him, as a Being in whose power it is to make us truly happy, and to establish an inseperable Connexion between our *Duty* and our *Everlasting Interest*.

Nay 'tis suppos'd, That his infinite *Goodness* and *Mercy* inclines him to entertain such a favourable Commerce with us, To accept our sincere Homage and Worship, To hear our Prayers, and give merciful Answers to 'em; To receive our grateful acknowledgments; To regard our upright services with a favourable Eye, and to pour down his blessings upon us with a bountiful hand. So that we may come to him with a fixed Persuasion, *That he is, and That he is the Rewarder of all those that diligently seek him,* 11 Heb. 6.

Were he not a God thus *able* and thus *inclin'd* to take notice of and observe, To accept and reward our unfeigned Devotions and Homage, There were no Encouragement to erect a Temple for and to present our Religious Addresses to him.

3 This Assertion, That every true Christian is the Temple of God, do's

presuppose, That 'tis by divine Grace that we are restor'd to this Dignity and Privilege.

'Tis indeed true, That Man was in his Original Constitution design'd to be the *Temple of God*. He was actually so in his State of Innocence. He is so now by the right and obligation he is under to dedicate himself to God's special service.

But 'tis no less true, That Man in his corrupt and degenerate state is now miserably *indispos'd* for that Religious Intercourse that he shou'd maintain with God. All things in this once beautiful Temple of God are now wofully defac'd. Those clear *Notices* and *Discoverys* of divine Truth which were once as the Lamps of that sacred Place, are now in a great measure extinguish'd, So that the deprav'd Understanding of Man looks rather like a *Dungeon* for *Darkness* than a *Temple* for *Light*. Those *Laws* of God that were once written on the fleshy Tables of Man's heart are now in a great measure defac'd, and 'tis but a few broken fragments that remain. That *Heart* that was once God's *Altar* from whence spiritual Oblations were wont to ascend in the flames of Love, is now wretchedly defil'd by

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by being consecrated to despicable Idols. That Incense of devout affections that was wont to mount up to Heaven is now prostituted to vile and contemptible Objects. Those Souls in which the Beauties of Holiness once shone (I mean those Graces that constitute the Moral Image of God) are now become a Cage of abominable Impuritys and brutish Lusts. There is now by nature no inward propension of Soul, to honour and reverence him, To love him and delight in him, To believe and trust him, To obey and serve him, To resemble and to Enjoy him. There is on the contrary an Affected and willful Alienation and Estrangement from him. 'Tis the perverse Language of our Hearts to him, *Depart from us, For we desire not the knowledge of thy Ways, What is the Almighty that we shou'd serve him, and What profit shou'd we have if we pray unto him?* xxi Job 14, 15. And thro' this wretched Disinclination of our Nature to Communion with God, This Temple of his in every Unconverted Unrenewed sinner being thus desolate and waste, nay polluted and profan'd, is in a great measure justly forsaken by him. Such impure and defiled Souls and Bodys are no fit Habitation

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bitation for an *holy God* to dwell in, nor can present to him any such *Worship* and *Honour* as he will accept. And therefore all vital delightful *Communion* between *God* and them is wofully *intercepted* and *lost*. They are unmeet for his special presence, his peculiar favour, and the special distinguishing *Fruits* thereof.

But yet the *B. God* has in his infinite *Mercy* form'd the *Wise* and *Gracious* Design of *Repairing* the *ruines* of this *Temple* of his ; And of *Restoring* Man to this excellent *Use* and this singular *honour* of being again the *Living Temple* of *God*.

It was for that *End*, That the *Eternal Word* was *made flesh*, and *tabernacled* among us. He became the glorious *Immanuel*, *God with us*, *God manifested in our Flesh*. And this ineffable *Inhabitation* of the *Eternal Word* in our *Nature*, was the highest *Affurance* that cou'd be given us of *God's* merciful Design to restore us to that *Communion* with himself which we had lost, and once more to dwell with the *Sons of Men*. Nay this *Bl. Immanuel* did therefore become our *atoning sacrifice*, that by a full *Expiation* of our guilt he might render it consistent

Living Temple of God. 11

sistent with the honour of that God whose Justice we had so highly injur'd and provok'd, to restore us to his favour, and to the priviledges of a gracious Intercourse with himself. And that human Nature he thus assum'd is thro' the glorious Inhabitation of the Deity become as it were an *Original Temple*, and a *Pattern* to which we must be conform'd by becoming our selves an *holy Temple to God*. And 'tis for this End, That he *has the Spirit without measure*, that by the Communication of it's renewing and Sanctifying Influences, he may new-mould and form our *Souls*, and *Bodys*, and prepare 'em for the uses and service of such a *Spiritual Temple*. And therefore, 'Tis only such as are by Faith vitally united to Christ, and made partakers of his Regenerating sanctifying Spirit that are actually the *holy Temples of God*. In being made such, *We are the Workmanship of God*. *We are his Building*. And 'tis to his divine Art and Power we must ascribe it that we are now made such an *holy Habitation to himself*.

But this leads me,

II. To consider, What is more directly *imply'd* and *included* in our being

the Temples of God; Or How and On what
accounts, we become the Temples of God.

Answer. We must here speak of these
Spiritual in some Allusion to Material
Temples.

Now in order to a Material House
or Building becoming the Temple of God,
It was requisite, That it shou'd be so-
lemnly dedicated to his Worship and spe-
cial Service; That he shou'd condescend
to dwell in it; That his solemn Worship
shou'd be celebrated there; And that
nothing shou'd be admitted into it, that
might profane or defile it.

Now to every true Christian's becom-
ing the Spiritual Temple of God, There
must be a concurrence of what is pa-
rallel to these Requisites of a Material
Temple.

As,

1. We become the Spiritual Temples
of God by a solemn Consecration of our selves
to his special service and use.

Solomon's Temple you know was so-
lemnly dedicated to God. 1 Kings viii.
And it was this Separation to this peculiar
and sacred use that distinguish'd a Tem-
ple from any other Building.

So must we become the Spiritual Tem-
ples of God by freely and entirely devo-
ting

Living Temple of God. 13

ing our *Bodys* and *Souls* (which are his) to glorifie him. We must dedicate our *Understandings* to contemplate, to admire, and adore him; Our *Wills* to choose him and cleave unto him; Our *Affections* to love him and delight in him; Our *Hearts* to enthrone him. Our *Tongues* to publish his Truths and celebrate his praises; Our *Eyes* to read and our *Ears* to hear his holy Word; Our *Bodies* to bow before him. All our *facultys* and *powers* to conspire in paying that reverential Homage and Worship that is infinitely due unto him. 'Tis such an unreserved and voluntary *self-dedication* to him that must invite him to accept of us for his *Temples*, and to make his peculiar *abode* and *residence* with us.

2. We become the *Spiritual Temples* of God, by his condescending to dwell with us, and to take up his *Special Abode* in us.

Thus the *Building* erected by Solomon became the *Temple* of God, when upon his Dedication of it to his service, The B. God vouchsaf'd as it were to come down and to dwell there. And accordingly, That *Cloud of Glory* in which the B. God appear'd there, was the Sensible *Mark* and *Symbol* of his *special* presence. He own'd it as his *Temple* when he thus fill'd it

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it with his Glory. And that Sensible Glory was therefore call'd the Shecinah or God's Habitation and Presence.

Now tho' there be no such *Sensible Glory* as the Mark of God's presence in every true Christian; Yet there is something more valuable, I mean, *The Spirit of God* who takes up his Abode in 'em, and by his stated and constant Operations carries on the great Work of their *Sanctification*, conforming 'em more and more to the nature of that blessed God they adore, exciting all filial Affections towards him in their Hearts, and disposing 'em for a constant and delightful Communion with him. And God's thus *sending his Spirit into our Hearts* to reside and dwell there for ever, is as certain a Sign, That he accepts the *Dedication* we make of 'em to him as his *Living Temples*; As God's *filling the House* that *Solomon* built with his Glory, was a certain Evidence that he accepted the *Consecration* he made of it to be his *material Temple*.

And this is plainly intimated to us in the Text, For when the Apostles had asserted, *That we are the Temples of God*, he adds by way of illustration and proof, *That the Spirit of God dwells in us.* And
else-

Living Temple of God. 15

elsewhere we are said to be an *Habitation of God thro' the Spirit*, 2 Eph. 22. Now tho' these Expressions may import, That 'tis the great Work of the Spirit in our Regeneration to frame and fashion us for the special service of God, to furnish us with those Principles of divine *Light and Life and Love* that render us capable of vital Communion with him; Yet their more direct Intent and Meaning is to acquaint us, That the *continued and abiding Operations* of that H. Spirit in order to our *Progressive Sanctification* are the sure *Testimony and Mark* of God's *special presence* in us. And therefore you may observe, That the Promise which our Saviour makes to those that love him and keep his Words, viz, *That the Father will love 'em, and the Father and he will come to 'em, and take up his Abode with 'em*, (at 14 John v. 23) plainly refers to the foregoing Promise of giving his H. Spirit to his Disciples that he may abide with 'em for ever, at v. 16.

3. We become the Temples of God by that *mutual Communion and Intercourse* that there is between him and us.

Material Temples were Places where God was suppos'd to meet and converse with Men. Thus when Solomon dedicated an

an House to God, As all their Publick Sacrifices were to be offer'd there, So God on his part assur'd 'em, *That he would put his Name there for ever, and his Heart and his Eyes should be there continually,* 1 Kings 8, 3. He would there hear their Prayers, and accept their Oblations and Sacrifices, and impart his Special Blessings to 'em.

In this sense also, *We are the Temples of God.* As the *Heart* of a devout Christian is the *Altar* from whence the *Sacrifices of Prayer and Praise* do daily ascend to God in the flames of Love; So may every upright Soul expect God's gracious presence to hear and answer his fervent supplications, To receive his thankful Tribute of Praise, and to accept all his spiritual oblations, and to dispense all needful Benefits and favours. The Soul of every true Christian is as it were *Consecrated Soyl*, where he may expect, That when ever he *draws near to God* with the tender of devout and filial Affections, God will *draw nigh to him* with the quickning Influences of his H. Spirit, and with the reviving manifestations of his peculiar complacency and Love.

4. We become *the Temples of God* by
main.

Living Temple of God. 17

maintaining that *Purity* and *Holiness* that becomes his *Special presence*.

The *Temple of Solomon* in order to God's continued Abode therein was to be preserv'd from whatever was legally *Unclean*. So that no *Person* or *Thing* was to be admitted into it, that was capable of *profaning* or *defiling* it. And hence the *Jews* that reckon'd the *Gentiles* as *Unclean*, were so careful to forbid their Access into the *Second Court* of the *Temple* where *themselves* were wont to offer their *Sacrifices*, for fear of *polluting* it. See the *Accusation* against *Paul*, *xxi Acts* 28, 29. &c.

In this sense must all true *Christians* be the *Temple of God*, by endeavouring to keep their *Bodies* and *Souls* pure and undefiled, and thereby fit *Mansions* for so pure and spotless a Majesty to take up his Abode in. And accordingly, The *Apostle* enforces his *Caution* to the *Corinthians* against *Fornication* by this Argument, That their *Bodies* themselves were the *Temples of the H. Ghost*. *1 Cor. 6 18*. And here in the *Text*, The *Apostle* intimates, That the *Temple of God* must be *holy*, and therefore warns us, That we *defile it not*. No *polluting Lust* must be harbour'd or cherish'd in our *Heart*, No allowed

allowed abominable practice must stain our Conversation, if we expect that special Residence of God with us, which is the great Privilege of his *Spiritual Temples*. None shall be admitted to the honour and happiness of such near converse with him but those that are (in their sincere Desire and Endeavour) *holy as he is holy*. We must cleanse our Hands and purify our Hearts, if we would acceptably draw nigh to God, or expect his drawing nigh to us.

It now remains, That we make some practical Improvement of this important Truth.

Are true Christians the Spiritual Temples of God? Then

I. We may hence infer, *How great Folly 'tis to confine either the Essential or special presence of God to a material Temple.*

It argues gross Ignorance to confine the *Essential Presence* of God to a material Temple.

This folly many of the *Heathens* run into for want of right apprehensions of that glorious Perfection of the divine Nature, his *Immensety* and *Omnipresence*. And 'tis in opposition to those mistaken Notions, That the Apostle tells the Men of *Athens*, *That God dwells not in Temples*

made

Living Temple of God. 19

made with hands. Since in him, We
all live and move and have our Being, 17
Acts 17. And Solomon in his Prayer at the
Dedication of the Temple guards the Israe-
lites against that dangerous mistake, But
will God indeed (saith he) dwell on the
Earth? Behold the Heaven, and Heaven
of Heavens cannot contain thee, How much
less this House which I have built? 1
Kings 8 27.

Nor must we confine the special and
gracious presence of God to any material
Temple.

There was indeed under the Law a
Sensible Glory as the mark of the divine
presence that was confin'd to the Taber-
nacle and to the Temple; And therefore
there alone their Publick Sacrifices were
to be brought. But this was by no
means Exclusive of God's special and gra-
cious presence with every upright Soul.
So much God himself intimates to the
Jews who valued themselves so much
on their material Temple. Thus saith the
Lord, The Heaven is my Throne and the
Earth is my Footstool, Where is the House
that ye build unto me? And where is the
Place of my rest? For all those things hath
my hand made, And all those things have
been, saith the Lord, But to this Man
will

will I seek, Even to him that is of a poor and contrite Spirit, and that trembles at my word. 66 Isa. 12. This Mansion he prefers before all the magnificent structures that human Art can at the greatest expence rear unto him. Nay whereas the Highest Heaven is a Temple incomparably transcending all Earthly ones in Glory, Yet that high and lofty one that inhabits Eternity, and dwells in the high and holy place disdains not to dwell with him that is of an humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the Contrite Ones. 57 Isa. 15. And if God's Special Presence under the Law was not confin'd to a material Temple, 'Tis much less so under the Gospel. As our Saviour intimates to the Woman of Samaria, when he tells her, That neither at this Mountain nor yet at Jerusalem they shou'd worship the Father. Under the Gospel, The Worship of God, (even his publick Worship) is as unconfin'd as the glorious Object of it. There is no vertue in any one Place more then another to recommend our Devotions to God. There is indeed a special Presence and Blessing promis'd to worshipping Societys, but not limited to any particular Places. We may indeed sett a-part convenient

venient Places for publick Worship; but must by no means think the divine presence confined to 'em. 'Tis true Christians alone that are now in the truest sense the Temples of God. 'Tis consecrated soil wherever they lift up holy hands to him. They need go no farther than their own hearts to meet and converse with God.

II. We may hence infer the marvellous Condescension of God that makes such sinful Creatures as we are his Living Temples.

What are these Souls of ours to which so manifold remains of Impurity cleave; That the B. God shou'd choose 'em for his Residence! What are our poor and defective services that he shou'd look on 'em with a favourable eye! That he shou'd accept and reward 'em! Has that high and lofty one that inhabits Eternity; the High and Holy Place for his Residence; and will he yet dwell in so mean an abode as that of an humble and Contrite Soul? What reason have we to magnify and adore that goodness of his that stoops so low! Well may we say with the Centurion, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under the roof of my House.

VIII Matt. 23

III. We may inherit the *Dignity* of every true Christian. That he is a *Living Temple* of God. How glorious and happy are those Souls whom he honours with his special Residence and Abode! Who wou'd not covet his presence, and be ambitious to entertain so glorious an *Inhabitant* and *Guest*? For where the B. God makes a Soul his peculiar *Habitation* and *Mansion* of his Abode. He dwells in it by the sacred Operations of his H. Spirit; He replenishes it with beams of divine Light; He stamps his own amiable Image there; He refreshes it with his Consolations and joys; He admits it to that freedom and Communion with himself which is both unspeakably *delightful* and *Beneficial*. He gives 'em to experience, what that great and precious Promise contains, *I will dwell with 'em, and walk in 'em, and be their God.* 2. Cor. 6. 16.

IV. I may hence urge all of you to become the *Temples* of God.

There are two grand Competitors for our Souls, Satan and God. If God have not got the possession, Satan keeps it. And O how dreadful is their Case, who are under the power of the Prince of the Air, the Spirit that rules in the children of disobedience!

obedience! 2 Eph. 2. We cannot look without pity on those of whose *Bodys* *Infernal Spirits* have the possession. But their Case is far more deplorable whose *Souls* are under his *Dominion* and *Conduct*. Such *Souls* are indeed (as 'tis said of *mystical Babylon*) the *Habitation* of *Devils*; and the *Hold* of every foul Spirit, and the *Cage* of every unclean and hateful Bird. 18 Rev. 2. And indeed, Where those *Souls* that shou'd be the *Temples* of *God* are forsaken by him, 'Tis no wonder, That those *impure Spirits* shou'd gain and keep the undisturbed Possession of 'em.

If we wou'd not have this to be our deplorable Case,

Let us sincerely *dedicate* our *Selves* to *God*. Let us *consecrate* our *Souls* and *Bodys* to his special and perpetual service. Let us freely give up our selves to his possession and use for-ever. Let us sett our selves apart from all *common* or *impure* use to be *holy* to him.

Let us beg his *renewing Spirit* to cleanse and purify our *Nature*, and to prepare us to become an *holy Habitation* and *Abode* to him. Let us implore his sanctifying *Grace* to enlighten our *Minds*, to rectify our *Inclinations*, To spiritualize and elevate our *Affections*, To banish

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every hateful Iniquity, Every defiling Lust, Every irregular Passion, that might so pollute our souls as to render 'em too noysom an Abode for him to dwell in, and might provoke him to retire and withdraw from 'em.

V. *Let us carry it as becomes those that are the Temples of God.*

As particularly.

1. *Let us value his gracious presence and Communion.*

Let us esteem it our highest Honour that so glorious a Majesty will make so mean a place as our *defiled Hearts* his habitation. Let us earnestly aspire to more intimate Intercourse with him. Let us breath after brighter Discoverys of his amiable Glory, fuller Communications of his quickning transforming Grace, and more ravishing manifestations of his Favour and Love. Let us aspire to that nearness and intimacy of Communion with him, and the ravishing delights resulting thence, which he is wont to admit prepared Souls unto. Let us be deeply sensible, *How Good 'tis for us to draw nigh to him.* 73 Psal. ult.

2. *Let God receive a daily Tribute of Homage and Service from us.*

Where

Where shou'd the Incense of Prayer daily ascend to God, but from the *Altar* of a devout *Heart*? Where shou'd God's *Praises* daily resound, Where shou'd these *Spiritual Sacrifices* be daily presented to him but in his *Spiritual Temple*? Where shou'd the *Fire* of true Devotion be kept continually *burning* but there? Frequent and lively contemplations of the Glory of God shining in his works and word, The ardent breathings of inflamed affections towards him; The warm Aspirations of our Souls towards him on the wings of *Faith* and *Hope*, are Exercises highly becoming those whom he chooses to be an *holy Temple and Habitation* to himself.

3. *Let us beware of defiling this Spiritual Temple of God.*

The *Profanation* of a *material Temple* was reckon'd a great sin under the *Law*. They reckon'd a peculiar *Reverence* due to the place where God so sensibly manifested his Glory. It was a Caution often given to the Israelites, That they shou'd reverence the *Sanctuary* of God. And keep their foot when they went to his House, xix *Lev.* 30. v *Eccl.* 1.

And our *B. Saviour* whipp'd the *Buyers* and *Sellers* out of the *Temple*, for

turning God's House of Prayer into an House of Merchandize.

My Brethren! God's Spiritual Temples are more valuable things in his Eye then any material ones. And he is as truly concern'd that the former shou'd be kept free from any allowed moral impurity, as that the Latter shou'd be kept free from any Ceremonial Defilement. And therefore the Apostle speaking of these Spiritual Temples, saith, i. e. That if any Man defile em, him will God destroy.

Hast thou dedicated thy Soul to God for his special Residence and Abode? He will resent and punish it as an heinous Indignity offer'd to him, if thou sufferest any such abominable polluting thing, as Malice and Envy, Hatred and Revenge, Exorbitant Passion or Pride to be harboured there.

Hast thou dedicated thy Body to be part of God's Temple, he will resent it as a grievous provocation, if thou defilest his Temple by nauseous Intemperance and Excess, by brutish Uncleaness and Lust. For that is in effect to banish him out of thy Soul by rendering it unsuitable for the presence and Converse of so infinitely pure and holy a Being. While we with Sampson sleep on the Lap of Dalilah,

Living Temple of God. 27

Dalilah, We may soon expect as he to find to our shame and sorrow, That *God is departed from us*. Spirituality and Purity in our Thoughts and Desires, Integrity and Sincerity in our Aims and Intentions for the glory of God and the Good of others, and a god-like heavenly Temper of Mind will invite an infinitely gracious God to bless those Souls with his special presence and his gracious Communications and Influences which we have consecrated to him.

VI. Are all true *Christians* The Temples of God, *This suggests one Argument to your Charity towards 'em.*

We reckon it an Instance of Piety and Zeal to repair those material Temples which are sett a-part for the Worship of God. Sure 'tis not a lesser but greater Instance of it to support and relieve those Bodys of necessitous Saints, that are the *Living Temples of the H. Ghost*. It wou'd be as inexcusable to suffer the latter as the former, to fall into ruines and decay for want of our seasonable *Liberality* to uphold 'em.

F I N I S.

Living Temple of God

Delilah We may soon say of us he to
and to our shame and sorrow, That
God is departed from us, spiritually and
unity in our thoughts and desires,
integrity and sincerity in our aims
and intentions for the glory of God
and the Good of others, and god-like
heavenly Temper of mind and will,
an infinitely gracious God to bless those
souls with his special presence and his
gracious Communications and inspirations
which we have contemplated of him.
Are all true Christians the Tem-
ple of God, the Image and Likeness
of him, Christ towards us.

We reckon to an instance of him
and Xel to regard those who are
which are the Temple of God, the
ship of God, which is not a temple but
greater instance of it to regard and re-
gard those who are the Temple of God,
that are the Living Temple of the Holy
Ghost. It would be as incredible to
utter the latter as the former, to fall into
vain and deny for want of a better
honorable liberty to behold and

3 NOV 3

PLATE 2

A
SERMON

PREACH'D

To an Auditory

OF

Young Persons.

Jan. 1st. 170⁵.

On *X Mark*, 21, 22.

By J. B.

DUBLIN,

Printed for the use of the Author,

1707.

A
SERMON

PREACHED

To an Auditory

O. F.

Young
Jan. 17. 1707.



On X Mark, 21. 22.

B. J. R.

DUBLIN.

Printed for the use of the Author,

1707.

A Sermon, &c.

X Mark vi, 25.

1. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest, Go thy way, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven, and come and take up the cross, and follow me.

2. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; For he had great Possessions.

THAT we may know of whom these words of our Lord are spoken (and how applicable they are to an Auditory of Young Persons) We will look back as far as the scripture Where we read, That when Jesus came forth into the way, There came one running, and kneeling to him, ask'd him,
Good

4 A Sermon Preach'd to

Good Master, What shall I do that I may inherit *Eternal Life*? Concerning this Person (if we compare this account with what the Evangelists *Matthew* and *Luke* give of the same Passage), we may observe these two things remarkable in him. *Viz.* That as to his *Age* he was but a *Young Man*. And 'tis not very usual to hear from Persons of that *Age* such a serious Enquiry as this about the way to *Eternal Life*. To such the vain *Amusements* and *Pleasures* of this World are so sutable to the gaiety of their Humour, and to the vanity of their unexperien'd Minds, that 'tis very rare for them to entertain any solicitous anxious thoughts about the important concerns of another. Again, As to his *Station*, He was a *Ruler*, *18 Luke, 18 v.* One who tho' young, was in some publique *Post* and *Office* that rendred him somewhat considerable in the World; so that in his circumstances we find the usual conjunction of secular *Wealth* and *Honour*. We see then that this desirable *Condition* and *Circumstances* in the World as well as his *Age*, carry'd with 'em a strong Temptation to the immoderate Love of *this Life*, and the Neglect of a *Jeiter*. And yet even this *Rich young Ruler*

ter was so far from being unthoughtful about his precious Soul, and the momentous Interests of the Life to come, that we see him applying himself to our B. Saviour for his Instructions in reference to 'em, with great marks of seeming Zeal and Devotion. He ran to him, as glad of such an happy opportunity of conversing with him on that great subject, and hearing from his own mouth the words of Eternal Life, (which 'tis probable that he had heard from others to be the chief subject of our Saviour's preaching). He kneel'd down to him, To express the Veneration he had for so Eminent a Teacher as he took him to be. And to insinuate into our Lord's esteem and affections, and to oblige him to give a more full and free Answer to the Question he had to propose, he gives him the Title commonly us'd to their Celebrated Rabbi's or Doctors of their Law; Good Master. And then he puts the Question itself, which he so earnestly desir'd his resolution of, *What shall I do that I may inherit Eternal Life?*

Our B. Saviour in his Answer first takes Notice of the Title he had given him, and then speaks more directly to the Question he propos'd. For the Title of

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of *God*. Our Lord tells him it did primarily belong to *God alone*. Partly, That he might hereby discountenance that proud affectation of swelling Titles which the Jewish Doctors were so prone to, and on the contrary shew a Pattern of Humility; And partly, that he might lead him to the contemplation of *divine Goodness*, as the true spring of *Eternal Life*, and of that *sanctifying Grace* that must prepare us for it.

For the *Question it self*, He directs him to the *Commands of God*, as pointing to us the *true Way to Eternal Life*. *Thou knowest the Commands, Do not commit Adultery, &c.* Or as the Evangelist *Matthew* has it, *If thou wilt enter into life, Keep the Commands*. I see no cogent reason for supposing as many here do, That our Lord speaks to him in the Language of the *Law of Innocence*, or the *Covenant of Works*, which requir'd *sinless obedience* as the *Condition of Eternal Life*. It seems to me more natural and unstrain'd to understand his words of that *sincere Obedience* to *God's Commands*, which is as truly the *Way to Eternal Life* under the *Covenant of Grace*, as *sinless Obedience* was under the *Law of Innocence*. And 'tis observable, That our Lord in reciting the

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Commands, mentions only those of the 2d Table. Probably to instruct us, That that Holiness which must dispose us for Eternal Life, does as truly include in it a conformity to the Precepts of the 1st as to those of the 2d Table. The great God laying as great a stress on our Duty to our Neighbour as on that we immediately owe to himself, and binding the former upon us with the same solemn Sanction that he does the latter.

Upon this Answer of our Lord the young Man replies with a forward confidence, Master, All these have I observed from my youth. No doubt he here spake according to the narrow & corrupt Gloss which the Jewish Doctors had put on the Moral Law, and thought he had sufficiently observ'd the Precepts thereof by abstaining from the gross External Acts of Sin forbidden in the 2d Table. For had he understood the Spirituality and Perfection of the divine Law (as reaching to his inward Thoughts and Inclinations) he would have spoken in more modest Terms, and express'd an humbling sense of those manifold Deviations from that perfect Rule of Righteousness, which even the Sincere Observers of the Law of God are conscious of; Nay he would have

have seen that he fell short of Integrity in his Obedience.

But upon this Answer of the Young Man we read in my Text, *That Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest, Go thy way, &c.* No doubt when 'tis said That our Saviour lov'd him, 'Tis not to be understood of the same Love that he bare to his sincere Disciples who had forsaken all to follow him. But yet it dos imply That he saw something commendable and hopeful in him; which he thought fit so far to approve and Encourage. And And therefore that he might discover to him where his principal Defect lay, And how far short he was of that universal Holiness that is requisite in all that would be successful Candidates of Eternal Life, He puts him to the Trial by this particular Command, *Go and sell all that thou hast, &c.* If thou would'st indeed obtain Eternal Life, Immediately consent to abandon all for it, and forego thy earthly in hope of an heavenly Treasure, and come, take up thy Cross and follow me. And what the Issue was when he was put to this strict and severe Trial, the Text tells us, *He was sad at that saying, and went away grieved, For he had great Possessions..* What

What may be farther needful to clear the sense and scope of this Excellent Passage will occur in speaking to these following Observations which I shall draw from it, and briefly speak to in their order.

I. We may observe, That a solicitous concern to obtain Eternal Life, and serious Enquiry about the way to it, is peculiarly commendable in Young Persons, and to be greatly encourag'd.

II. We may observe, That the Terms of obtaining Eternal Life are the same to Young and Old, and particularly This is one of them, That we shou'd be willing and ready when-ever we are call'd thereto, to part with all for it, To abandon every thing that stands in competition with it.

III. We may farther observe, That many who have some faint desires of attaining Eternal Life, may yet fall short of it, because they are not willing to come up to the Terms that are requir'd,

I begin with the

First Observation from the Words, viz. That a solicitous concern to obtain Eternal Life, and a serious Enquiry about the Way to it, is peculiarly commendable in Young Persons, and to be greatly encouraged.

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Before

Before I consider this Observation itself, I wou'd only make these two remarks by the way,

1. That the Pious Jews did before our Saviour's coming entertain the Belief and Persuasion of Eternal Life.

This is manifest from the Question which this *young Ruler* propounds. And with the like Question we find that a *Jewish Lawyer* accosts him in another place, 10 *Luke*. And our Lord himself takes notice of it, when urging the *Jews* to *search the Scriptures*, he adds, *For in them ye think ye have Eternal Life, and they are they which Testify of me*, 5 *John* 39. 'Tis true indeed the Covenant of Peculiarity made with that Nation as a Collective Body (which is usually call'd the Law) had only Temporal Promises annex'd to the Observance of it. But the Promise made to *Abraham* long before the Delivery of the Law, did contain in it the true Blessedness of Eternal Life, as that which thro' the promised Seed of *Abraham* shou'd come upon all Nations. Nay, even the Faith of the Antideluvian Patriarchs whereby they believed, *That God was the Rewarder of all that diligently sought him*, 11 *Heb.* 6. rais'd 'em to the Expectation of an Happiness beyond the

Young Persons.

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the Bounds of Time, and to be enjoy'd in *the Life to come*. (See the Case of *Enoch v. 5.*) Much more did the Faith of the Hebrew Patriarchs enable them to look for a City that has Foundations, whose Maker and Builder is God, and prompt 'em to seek for a better even an Heavenly Country, 11 Heb. 10. 16. The Faith of *Moses* did not only realize an invisible God to his view, but gave him a prospect of an unseen Recompence of Reward, 11 Heb. 26, 27. Nay, this Faith enabled the Jewish Martyrs to endure the greatest Tortures, and to refuse offer'd Deliverance, by giving 'em the hope of obtaining a better Resurrection, v. 35. *Eternal Life* was therefore as truly the great Object of the Faith of good Men under that obscurer Edition of the Covenant of Grace before the Coming of *Christ*, as 'tis of ours that enjoy the Gospel of *Christ*. There is only this difference, That *Life and Immortality* are now brought into far clearer Light. The Promises of it are more express and full, the Author of it, the Way in which he merited and procur'd it, and that in which we must seek and obtain it, are far more clearly reveal'd.

2. We may here see the great Advantage of Pious Education. For

For to that we may most probably ascribe these good Dispositions that our Saviour found in this hopeful Youth, and was so pleased with. He had by his Parents been early instructed concerning that *Eternal Life* which was the great Object of Faith to all that enjoy'd the Benefit of *Supernatural Revelation*. They had taught him betimes the *Commands* of God, had endeavour'd to possess his Mind with a due Reverence for 'em, and to enure him betimes to the Religious observance of 'em. And accordingly we see some valuable Fruits of their good Education; He was under some serious Concern to obtain *Eternal Life*; He was willing to be at some pains for it; His Nature tho' not *Sanctified* was greatly *Civiliz'd*; His corrupt Inclinations tho' not yet *subdued* were under some considerable *Restraint*; And tho' he was yet a Stranger to the *Vital Power* of Religion, yet he had a plausible *Form* of it, and seem'd inclin'd and dispos'd to attend to any farther Instructions concerning his Duty. And even such Fruits of Pious Education are not to be altogether despis'd.

But to return from this Digression to the Observation it self.

A Sollicitous Concern to attain Eternal Life, and a Serious Enquiry about the way to it, is commendable in all, but especially in Young Persons.

I. 'Tis commendable in all.

For Eternal Life is the noblest Object of the Regular Ambition of an Immortal Soul. For a Man to aspire to it, argues that he has some just Notions of the *Vanity* and *Emptiness* of this *World*, of the *Shortness* and *Uncertainty* of *Human Life*, and of the vast disproportion there is between *Time* and *Eternity*. It shews that he has some suitable Apprehensions of the Nature and Worth of his Soul, and of the Endless Duration 'tis capable of and design'd for. Nay, if such a Candidate of Eternal Life have right Conceptions of it, as a State of *Sinless Purity* as well as *unallayed Happiness*; If he rightly apprehend that perfect Blessedness it self to result from an entire Conformity to the Nature and Will of God, and from the full Enjoyment of him, then to aspire to it under that Notion, argues, That we do entertain some Honourable Thoughts of God, and have at least some Good, tho' faint and weak *Desires* toward Him. And to be seriously inquisitive about
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the Way to Eternal Life, is a good Evidence that we have such Convictions of the *Excellency* of it, that we are willing to be at some Pains and Labour to secure it.

And such a *Sollicitous Concern* for attaining *Eternal Life*, such a *Serious Enquiry* about the *Way to it*, is a good Preparatory Disposition, and the first Step towards it. This opens our Ears to Divine Instructions. This renders us attentive to the Word of God, the great Design whereof is to Reveal that Unconceivable State of Endless Glory and Felicity, and to call us to the Vigorous Prosecution of it, and to direct our Feet into the *Strait Gate* and *Narrow Paths* of *Eternal Life*. This tends to Enhance our Esteem of that *Blessed Saviour* that *has the Words of Eternal Life*, and of that *Gospel* that *brings Life and Immortality to light*, and of those Faithful *Dispensers* of it who come to *show us the Way of Salvation*, 6 John 68. 2 Tim. 1. 10. 16 Acts 17. This tends to give their Divine Message a due Authority and Weight upon our Consciences, and disposes us to give it a welcome Entertainment. This greatly prepares us to embrace such a Divine Revelation, as gives

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us both a clearer Discovery of the *Nature* and *Duration* of a Future State of Happiness, and fuller Assurance of the undoubted *Certainty* of it, and plainer Instructions concerning the *Terms* on which it may be obtain'd. So that there is a happy Step gain'd towards a Man's Conversion, when once he is brought thus far to be desirous of Eternal Life, and inquisitive how he may attain it.

And methinks this Question carries something more in it, than for a Man barely to enquire under some present Terrors of Conscience, How he shall be *saved from the Wrath to come*, and escape that everlasting Vengeance his Sins have deserv'd? That Question may spring from a meer Servile dread of Justice. Whereas this Question in the Text, *What shall I do to inherit Eternal Life?* springs rather from more ingenuous Thoughts of the *Goodness* of God, as the Liberal Rewarder of all that *diligently seek him*.

2. But if such a Sollicitous Concern to attain Eternal Life, and such a serious Enquiry about the Way to it, be commendable in all, 'tis much more so in those that are *Young*.

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And the Reason of that is obvious, viz. Because, They are under the strongest Temptations to neglect and postpone the serious Thoughts of it.

For those that are Young, They are but just entered on the World, and are apt to imagine that they have many Years yet before 'em. They are ready to promise to themselves the ordinary Extent and Date of Human Life, and perhaps according to that they have 40 or 50 or 60 Years in their prospect. And this strongly tempts 'em to think they may safely adjourn the Thoughts of another World and of all Preparation of it for many Years yet to come. Besides they are apt to judge, that such serious & solemn Thoughts of a *Life to come* are too Grave for their Age, and will be more reasonable for a *Sick Bed*, or when *Grey-Hairs* and the Infirmities of Age come upon 'em. They are now in the prime of their Youth; Their Senses are vigorous and quick, and capable to relish the Pleasures of this Animal Life. This World now appears to 'em in it's most Amiable Dress, and that inveigling *Harlot* displays all its attractive *Charms* before their Eyes. And when their own desirable and plentiful Circumstances

ces in the World give 'em a fair prospect of all sensual Satisfaction in the pleasing Enjoyments of it, the Temptation is strong to slight and disregard the Interests of Eternal Life, that are both future and unseen. And therefore 'tis the more commendable to see such as are surrounded with all the enticing Delights of this Life, to be yet Sollicitous about the Concerns of Life Eternal; To see such as are but entering on the Stage of this Earth to set their Faces towards Heaven; To behold those whose Vanity might rather prompt 'em to aspire to Secular Honours and Preferments, seeking to enter into the Kingdom of God, and Lifting themselves as the Candidates of Honour, Glory and Immortality: To hear from them such serious Enquiries about the way to Eternal Life, from whom we might rather expect to hear of some busy Projects, How they may become *Rich* or *Great* in the World, How they may spend their Days in Sensual Jollity and Mirth; To discern in such Young Persons as these, such a serious solicitude about their Souls and their Eternal Welfare, is very surprizing and affecting, and cannot but raise in us some

comfortable Expectations concerning 'em. Such an hopeful and promising Temper is to be greatly commended and encourag'd; And no wonder then that it did in some measure attract the Eye and Heart of our Blessed Saviour; No wonder that when he beheld the towardsly disposition of this Young Ruler that he *loved him*.

Besides such *Young Persons* seem to express a higher Value for *Eternal Life*, when they so early enquire the way to it. 'Tis no such wonder to see those Sollicitous about it that have found by long Experience the Vanity of this World, and whose Hopes from it have been miserably disappointed. Much less is it any wonder to see Dying Persons desirous of Heaven when the World has left 'em, and *Heaven* appears to 'em as the only *Refuge* from *Hell*. They may in that Case be just willing to go to Heaven, as a Man *Condemn'd* to the *Gibbet* is rather willing to be Transported. But for a Man to make *Heaven* his *early Desire* & *first Choice* argues an higher Esteem of it, and puts a greater Honour on the Gracious Offer and Proposal of it.

Thus you see, How commendable 'tis in all, but especially in young Persons,

to see 'em concern'd and solicitous about Eternal Life, and inquisitive about the Way to it.

I now proceed to the

II. *Observation from the Words, viz. That the Terms of obtaining Eternal Life are the same to the Old and Young, And particularly, This is one of 'em, That we should be willing and ready whenever we are call'd thereunto, to part with all for it, to abandon every thing that stands in competition with it.*

Now in order to the clearing the Truth of this *Observation*, and thereby the Scope of this important Passage, We must a little distinctly consider, in what Sense we must understand this Young Ruler's Question, and then what was our Saviour's Design and Intent in the Answer he here gives to it.

First, As to the Young Man's Question, it may admit of a twofold Sense and Construction.

For either the meaning of it may be, *What shall I do to merit and deserve Eternal Life at the Hands of God? What shall I do, that may enable me to claim it as a Reward of Debt from his Justice? What Works shall I perform that may bear some Equality and Proportion to that Reward?*

Or else the meaning of it may only be, What shall I do that I may attain that Eternal Life which a Merciful God has promis'd as a *Reward of Grace*? What shall I do in order to the *securing* my *Interest* in it, and becoming *meet* for the *Actual Possession* of it?

Secondly, We may accordingly hence determine what was our Saviour's Intent and Design in the *Answer* he here gives to the Young Man's *Question*.

If we take the *Question* to be propos'd in the former Sense, as if the Young Man had said, What shall I do that will *merit* *Eternal Life*, and enable me to *claim* it from the strict *Justice* of God as a *Reward of Debt*? Then indeed, We must conclude, it was the Intent of our Lord in his Answer to convince him of the Vanity of such Pretensions by shewing him how far short he fell of the *Perfection* of the Law in his *Obedience* to it. And tho' our Lord might have shewn him this in reference to the *Dutys* of the 2d. Table which he pretended to have *kept from his Youth*, by discovering to him the *Spirituality* and *Extent* of 'em. (As he convinc'd the Lawyer of his failure in reference to that comprehensive Summary of *Second-Table-Dutys*

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Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self, by shewing him that *every Man* was his *Neighbour*, X *Luke 29.80, &c.*) But since our Lord knew that the Love of this World was the Predominant or *Master Sin* in the Heart of this Young Man, he chooses rather to convince him of the utter Imperfection of his Obedience by proposing such a Command to him as he easily foresaw wou'd lay it most open to the View of his own Conscience. And to that end he requires him to *Sell all he had, and to give it to the Poor, and to come and take up the Cross and follow him.* And indeed the main of this Command was virtually contain'd in the first and great Command, of *loving the Lord our God with all our Heart and Soul, &c.* For that obliges us to prefer his favour and his Heavenly Reward above Life it self, and all the comforts of Life, and to renounce 'em all whenever he requires it. And this the Young Man upon the Tryal soon found that his Heart cou'd not yield unto. And such a Proof as this of his failing in the Observance of the greatest Command in the Law was sufficient to convince him that it was in vain for him to claim Eternal Life as a Reward of

of Debt, and that all proud Pretensions of Merit were to be for ever renounc'd. And it is both useful and proper frequently to set before Men the perfection of the Law of God to make 'em sensible that they must owe Eternal Life not to their Merits, but to his Mercy, thro' a Mediator, not to the Dignity of their Works, but to his Gracious Promise. They must receive it as the Gift of God thro' Jesus Christ our Lord, VI Rom. ult.

But then if on the other hand, We suppose the Meaning of the Question to be, *What shall I do that I may inherit Eternal Life as a Reward of Grace? What shall I do, that I may secure my Interest in it, and become meet for the Actual Possession of it?* Then we must suppose, That our Lord's Design and Scope in his Answer is, To shew him, that *Universal Holiness, that Sincere Obedience to all God's Commands* was necessary to our *attaining Eternal Life*; And that his Obedience (notwithstanding the great Opinion he himself had of it) fell short of such *Sincerity*. And to convince him that it did so, he tries the Sincerity of his Obedience by requiring one considerable Instance and Proof of it. God's Law requires us (as I observ'd before) *To love him*
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with all our Heart and Soul, &c. And consequently to prefer his favour and his Reward before every thing in this World that stands in competition with 'em. Now saith *Christ*, I'll try whether thou dost so, I'll put *God* and the *World* in competition, Come, Give thy *Goods to the Poor*, and take the *Heavenly Treasure in lieu of 'em*. Take up the *Cross*, and follow me thro' *Sufferings and Persecutions* to that *Heavenly Glory and Crown*. If thou refusest this, 'tis evident, That thou lovest this *World* more than *God*, that *Earth* is dearer to thee than *Heaven*, and that thou wilt rather quit thy hopes of *Eternal Life*, then run the hazard of *Temporal Sufferings* for it.

And this I take to be the true Intent and Scope of our Blessed Saviour's Answer.

But here it may be Enquired, if this was our Saviour's Intent, viz. To give this Young-Man proper Directions how to attain *Eternal Life*, why dos he not direct him to *believe on himself* as the *Author* of it? Why dos he say, *If thou wilt Enter into Life keep the Commands*; And elsewhere to the *Lawyer* that propounded the like Question, *Love the Lord thy God, &c.* And *Love thy Neighbour*.

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bour as thy Self, Do this (i. e. sincerely) *and live.* Is this the Language of the Gospel? To this

I Answer, That our Saviour's Answer is every way best adapted to the Capacity and present State of this *Young Querist*:

To that purpose, let it be consider'd,

1. That 'tis probable our Lord here design'd to strike at that pernicious practical Error so common among the Jewish Doctors, That a bare *External Obedience* to *One* or at least to a *Few* of the most important Commands of God was sufficient for the attainment of Eternal Life.

Hence we read of their asking our Lord, *Which was the first and great Command?* 22 *Matth.* 35. 12 *Matth.* 28. For this was a Question agitated among themselves, some preferring *Circumcision*, others the *Observation of the Sabbath*, others the *Law of Sacrifices*, others the *Observance of some Tradition of the Elders*. And hence our Saviour commends the discreet Answer of that *Scribe*, who fix't upon the *Love of God and his Neighbour* as the *great Commands*, and even preferable to *Burnt-Offerings* and *Sacrifices*. And then that they thought a bare *External Obedience* to these Com-
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mands sufficient is manifest from our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, wherein he takes so much pains to vindicate 'em from these narrow Glosses, and to explain the *Spirituality* of 'em. And on that occasion declares to his own Disciples, That *except their Righteousness (or Holiness) exceeded that of the Scribes and Pharisees they should not enter into the Kingdom of God* * V. Matth. 23.

It was therefore very congruous to the Wisdom of our Lord, first to root this dangerous Error out of their Minds, and to convince 'em of the necessity of *inward Universal and Sincere Holiness* in order to their attainment of *Eternal Life*. For this is a Truth of the last necessity, and highest consequence to be fix'd in the Minds of all that wou'd be the successful Candidates of *Eternal Life*.

2. It must also be consider'd, That our Lord do's not Exclude, tho' he do not here so clearly mention, *Faith in himself* as the *Author* of *Eternal Life*.

He supposes here, That this Young Man did believe the *Promises* of the *Old Testament* concerning that *Seed of Abraham* in whom all Nations of the Earth should be blessed. Nay he do's here proceed so far as to require him to come

to him, and List himself in the Number of his *Disciples* and *Followers* that he might from him be more fully instructed in the Words of *Eternal Life*. And perhaps this was as much as he was then capable to receive or bear. 'Tis manifest that the *Disciples* themselves had but dark apprehensions of our Saviour's *Mediation*. They were so far from discerning, that he was to procure *Eternal Life* for 'em by his *Sufferings* and *Death*, that they cou'd not with patience bear it when he foretold 'em of his *Death*. And the very sight of his *Death* did for a while almost extinguish their hopes of his promised *Redemption*, XXIV *Luke* 21. When he told his Hearers of giving his *Flesh* for the *Life of the World*, and spake to 'em of eating his *Flesh*, and drinking his *Blood*, of believing in the *Merit* of his *Passion* to *Eternal Life*, it seem'd to 'em an hard saying which they cou'd not bear, and tempted many of 'em to go away from him. See 6 *John* 60, &c. No wonder then that our Blessed Lord shou'd not to such raw and uninstructed Querists as this Young Man, immediately propose this Doctrine, concerning *Eternal Life* as the purchase of his *Blood*, to be believed

lieved and entertained, which his Disciples themselves had not yet fully learned. This wou'd (as himself speaks in the like case) have been to put *New Wine* into *Old Bottles*, the *Bottles* would *burst* and the *Wine* be *lost*. Our Blessed Lord therefore wisely reserv'd such clearer Instructions as these for a fitter Season, when those Glorious Events of his *Resurrection* and *Ascension*, would expound the great Design and Efficacy of his Death, and shew the exact Accomplishment of what the Scriptures had foretold, both concerning his *Sufferings* and the *Glory* that should follow.

But there remains one Question more to be consider'd, viz.

Whether what our Lord here requires of this Young Man, contain such *Terms* of *Eternal Life* as are *common* to *all*, or this Command be *peculiar* to *him*?

Answer. The main of what our Lord enjoyns contains such *Terms* of *Salvation* as are *common* to *all*.

All are required in order to the attainment of *Eternal Life*, to prefer a *Treasure in Heaven* before all the *Possessions* of *this Earth*. All are enjoyn'd to *deny themselves* and to *take up their Cross* and *follow Christ*, whenever he shall call 'em to

pass thro' the *Cross* to the *Crown*, and thro' *Sufferings* into *Glory*. All are oblig'd so to value *Eternal Life* as to renounce every thing, even *Temporal Life* it self, when it stands in *opposition* to it or *competition* with it. All are obliged so to value and esteem the Blessed *Author* of it, as to be ready to Sacrifice the dearest Interests of *Life*, nay *Life* it self, when he commands 'em, to his superior Interest, to his *Glory* and *Service*. These are *Terms* that all are required to submit to, who pretend to be *Expectants* of *Eternal Life*.

But there seems to be one particular Precept peculiar to this Young Man, viz. That of *Selling all that he had and giving it to the Poor*.

Some I confels have suppos'd that τὰ ὑπερπεσόντα do's not here signify *all he had*, but all that he cou'd well spare from his own just occasions out of his *great Possessions*. And so they suppose, that our Lord here recommends no more to him then such a large Exercise of *Liberality* to the *Poor*, as was proportionable to his real *Abilities*. And upon that supposition, there is nothing at all in our Lord's Command peculiar to him, but rather what

is common with him to all that (as he) are rich in this World.

But if we understand the Words more strictly of *all that he had*, then indeed, they are a Command *peculiarly* given to this Young Man to try his inward predominant Frame and Disposition. This Precept is not altogether unlike that of God to Abraham, when by the way of Tryal he commanded him to go and offer up his only Son Isaac. This being a very substantial Evidence and Proof how greatly he feared him. And so it was no way unbecoming the Wisdom of Christ to try how far this Young Man that seem'd so sollicitous to attain Eternal Life did prefer it before all the Interests of this, by requiring him to part with all his present Possessions for an unseen Heavenly Treasure.

Here is therefore no solid Foundation for the Popish Distinction of Councils and Commands. This being as real a Command to the Young Men here, as that of Sacrificing his Son was to Abraham. It was a Command accommodated to his particular Circumstances, and design'd for the Trial of his Temper and Disposition. And there was the greater need of this Trial now because all the

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Disciples of Christ were like to meet with that Persecution that would set the World and Heaven in Competition.

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III^d. Observation from the words, viz. *That many who have some faint desire of attaining Eternal Life, may yet fall short of it, because they are not willing to come up to the Terms that are requir'd.*

This was the Case of the Young Man here. He had some *desires* of Eternal Life; He was willing to take some *pains* for it; He yielded some External Obedience to God's Commands; But when this severe Command came that put it to the Tryal, Whether God or Mammon, Whether Heaven or Earth, Whether the Love of this Life, or the desire of Life Eternal had the Ascendant in his Heart, he then soon discovered, That he valued his Earthly Riches before the Heavenly Treasure, and was not willing to part with his Temporal Possessions for an Eternal Inheritance. 'Tis said, That he was sad at that saying and went away griev'd for he had great Possessions. Here was a manifest Struggle between his Conscience and his Inclination, between his Love of this Life, and his

his desire of *Life Eternal*. Gladly wou'd he have compounded the matter, and attain'd Heaven and Salvation on easier Terms. He was loth to quit his hopes of *Eternal Life*, but more loth to abandon the valuable Interests of *this*. He went away indeed, as unwilling to comply with terms so contrary to the grain of **Carnal Self-Love**, and of a **Worldly Mind and Heart**. But he went away sorrowful, that *Eternal Life* was set at too high a Price, and that his Hopes of it were like to be disappointed.

And this is really the Case with thousands of those that set up for *Candidates of Eternal Life*. They wou'd bid fair for it, if a few ineffectual wishes, if a few cheap and easy Duties of Religion wou'd Entitle 'em to it. But if they must mortify their dearest Lusts, If they must cut off their right hand, or pluck out a right eye, If they must lay their all at the foot of **Christ**, If they must consent to deny themselves, and take up their Cross and follow him, If they must consent to forego their most valuable Possessions on Earth (whenever call'd to it) in hope of an *Heavenly Treasure*, They are ready to say as those in another Case,

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Case, *This is a hard saying, and who can bear it?* 6 John 60.— They are ready like this *Young Man* to go away griev'd, that they cannot reconcile their *Heavenly Hopes* with their *Sensual Lusts* or their *Worldly Interests*.

It now remains, That we Improve what has been said. And

I. Let me hence urge all of you, but especially those that are Young, to be sollicitously concern'd about attaining Eternal Life, and Inquisitive about the way to it.

And truly I fear, That as to many of you, you have not gone so far as this *Young Ruler* in my Text. Perhaps some of you there may be that have squandered away the greatest part of your Life, and have never once entertain'd any serious thoughts about the securing of Life Eternal. And O what reason have you to reflect with Shame and bitter Anguish, that the main part of your present Life is expir'd, and you have not begun to Live to any valuable purpose, nor have once propos'd any End or Design worthy of an Immortal Soul to pursue ! And O what base Contempt is this of Eternal Life ! What an horrid Affront to the Grace of God that offers it !

To

To the Son of God that purchas'd it,
And what a stupid undervaluing of
your own Souls, dos so long an un-
concernedness about, and neglect of,
Eternal Life argue ! And if you per-
sist in it, How will you judge your selves
thereby unworthy of Everlasting Life, and
quickly expose your selves to the mis-
eries of the *Second Death* ?

And for you that are Young, I may
justly fear, That some of you have never
yet consider'd the Nature and Worth
of your precious Souls, and of the Im-
portance of that *Eternal Life* that the
Gospel offers to your Acceptance and
Choice. Some of you have never per-
haps put this serious Question to your
own Souls, and much less to others, to
desire the Benefit of their Instruction,
O what shall I do to inherit Eternal Life ?
And 'tis to such of you that I wou'd
suggest a few Considerations to excite
your early Concern about it.

1. You are now Enttring on the Bu-
siness of Life, and it therefore now
concerns you, to consider the only valu-
able end of it. It shou'd be the ear-
liest Enquiry of a reasonable Creature,
What do I live for ? What Design shall I
pursue ? For the fixing upon the right

end of Life will in a great measure direct us to the *proper means* of attaining it, and bring all our other Affairs into a regular *Subordination* to it. And can you think it the most valuable end of Life, to *Eat* and *Drink*, and *Sport* and *Play*? Can you think this the Noblest Design that a reasonable Soul was made for, to cater for this Mortal Body, and to provide for the Accommodations of this Poor Animal Life? Is thy Soul infus'd into this *Glob* of *Earth*, only to keep this *corruptible Flesh* from *putrifying*? Alas if this were the highest end thy Soul was form'd for, the bitter Complaint and Expostulation of the Psalmist were highly reasonable, *Wherefore hast thou made all Men in vain?* 89 *Psal.* 47.—But if thy Soul be indeed capable to know and adore, to obey and serve, to imitate and resemble the Blessed God; If it be capable of and intended for a perpetual Duration; If it have such an Happiness in it's Offer and View as Results from a perfect Conformity to the Blessed God, and full Enjoyment of him, sure this, this is the Noblest End thou can't propose; This is incomparably the most Excellent Design that thou can't pursue. And not to make this thy chief Design,

Design, is in effect to *herd* thy self with the *Beasts* that *perish* instead of *associating* thy self with the *highest Angels*. 'Tis to live as if thou hadst more *alliance* to *Earth* than to *Heaven*, and hadst more regard to this *Clod of Clay* than to the *Breath of Life* that animates it.

2. Nay consider, That this Design can never be too early propos'd and pursued. It were the most stupid Imagination to think that thou can'st be *happy too soon*. There is one Year more past over thy Head. So much of the short Time of Life is irrecoverably *elaps'd*. Thou canst not assure thy self of Living to the end of another Year. As *young* as thou art, Death (that makes no distinction of Age when it has a Commission from the great Lord of Life) may surprize thee in thy wretched Neglects before another Year begins. Perhaps there are but a few Days or Weeks before thee wherein it will be possible for thee to *lay hold on Eternal Life*. So that thou hast no reasonable Temptation to put off this great concern with tedious and unaccountable delays. This being a matter of the utmost necessity and greatest moment shou'd be first attended to and principally regarded.

3. Nay, Consider, Thou dost not put a due Value on *Eternal Life*, if thou art not early solicitous to obtain it. Thou offerest an Indignity to it, if thou givest any thing the preference before it. Thou affrontest the marvellous Grace of God, and slightest the most advantageous Offer it ever made to undeserving Sinners, if the Tenders of *Eternal Life* meet not with an *early* as well as *thankful* acceptance: For the practical Language of thy delays is, That thou thinkest thou hast something *greater* and *better* in thy View.

4. Once more, Consider how acceptable to *Christ* thy early Sollicitude about *Eternal Life* will be. If he so loved this *Young Ruler*, because he found some Inclinations in him this way, how much more will he love those that are as inquisitive, as he, about the way to *Eternal Life*, but come with a better Disposition to comply with the Terms of obtaining it.

O then take the Gospel-offer of *Eternal Life* into your most serious Consideration. You that are *Young* are the *Seed of the Church*, and the *Hope of the rising Generation*. O let us see you *early asking the way to Zion with your Faces thitherward*.

ward, 50 Jer. 5. However the Children of Infidel or ungodly Parents may thro' their wretched Ignorance or Inconsideration make light of Heaven and Salvation, let us find another Temper in you ; To you these great and precious Promises of God do as it were first belong, O put in your early Claim to 'em. And if you are indeed solicitous to obtain Eternal Life, and inquisitive about the way to it, Then

II. Let me hence offer something for your Direction and Encouragement.

First for your Direction.

And here I must begin with a Direction that the Young Man in the Text was not so capable to receive, but which under the clear Dispensation of the Gospel, 'tis proper to give to you.

Do you therefore seriously Consider, That you are by Nature Children of Wrath and Heirs of Hell. That Eternal Life is the free Gift of God, owing to his most undeserved Sovereign Mercy: That this Eternal Life is in his Son. It was the invaluable purchase of his precious Blood ; It was the Fruit of his Sinless Obedience and Righteousness. He has most clearly reveal'd and made it known. He is the great Dispenser of it. He is the Sacred

Sacred Root and Spring of that Spiritual Life that is the Principle and Seed of it. You must therefore embrace it as the Gift of God thro' him. You must derive your Title to it from his Merits, and not your own. You must look for it as a Reward of Grace, and not of Debt. You must look for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus to Eternal Life. You must implore his renewing Grace to form in you the principles of that Spiritual Divine Life that is the Seed of it.

You must then resolve to comply with the necessary Terms of attaining it.

You must be deeply convinc'd, That there is an absolute necessity of a renewing Change in your Nature, and Sanctifying Change in your Lives, in order thereto. You must be sensible, That to corrupt Nature The Gate is Strait and the Way is Narrow that leads to Eternal Life, and few there be that find it. You must be perswaded that the Kingdom of Heaven must be taken, and Eternal Life laid hold on by an holy violence and force. You must be so convinc'd of the incomparable Excellency of this Heavenly Prize as to think no Labour or Toyl, no Hardships or Sufferings too great to secure it.

You

You must be willing to Sell all for this Pearl of Price. You must count the Cost of Religion, and consider the Difficulties and charge of this Noble Enterprize. You must set God and the World, Heaven and Earth, the advantages or Pleasures of this Life and the endless Joys of a better in serious Competition, and see which preponderates in your Hearts, and is like to weigh down the Scale, when it comes to the Tryal. You may be as closely put to it as the Young Man in my Text. And O consider, if the hopes of Eternal Life cannot prevail with you to abandon a darling Lust, to renounce the momentary Pleasures of Sin, to forsake vain and loose Company, to deny or restrain your Sensual Appetites, how shall it ever prevail with you to foregoe the dearest Enjoyments of Life, nay, even Life it self? O then Consider, that in this matter God and Heaven will admit of no Rival. You must either quit your hopes of Eternal Life, or abandon every thing that stands in competition with it. What do you then resolve upon? Will you on these Terms take up your Cross and follow Christ, or will you rather go away in sorrowful

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rowful from him? Shall the Love of a base Lust, or shall the Love of this World part you and him? Never dream of making a Composition between Christ and Belial, Heaven and the World. Make your Choice one way or other. If Eternal Life be your Choice, let every thing be Subordinate to the great Design of securing it, every thing rejected and abandon'd that stands in opposition to it, or competition with it.

Secondly, Let me suggest something also for your Encouragement.

And 'tis in short, That Eternal Life will infinitely compensate all you can do or suffer in order to the attainment of it.

Eternal Life is the sum of all that good that an Immortal Soul can desire or is capable to enjoy. It includes in it the highest Perfection of our reasonable Nature, resulting from the clearest Vision of God, and exactest Conformity to his Nature and Will. It includes the utmost Happiness of our State as it will result from the most vigorous Exercise of our Intellectual Powers on the noblest Objects, from the full Enjoyment of God, of Christ, and of the whole Heavenly Society. A State of Perfection

Perfection and Happiness as far above our comprehension as 'tis above our desert. And sure this is so inestimable a Prize as we shou'd think no pains or diligence too great to secure. What difficulties can we endure, what hazards can we run, what sufferings can we undergo, that are worthy to be compar'd with such a Transcendant Glory as this? What madness wou'd it be to prefer either the Filth of Sin or the Dirt of this World before it? Who wou'd not Sacrifice the Momentary Pleasures of Sin, Nay, the most Idolized Injoyments of Life to the more valuable hopes of such a Blessed Immortality? Let us then freely abandon our Sensual Lusts, Nay, be ready chearfully to foregoe our dearest Earthly Possessions for this Heavenly Treasure. We need not matter what we *lose* when it will be compensated with that inestimable *Gain* of *Eternal Life*.

F I N I S.

3 NO 63

A
SERMON

On the Case of the
Penitent Thief.

FROM

XXIII *Luke* 39, 40, &c.

Preach'd Sept. 30. 1705.

By J. B.

DUBLIN: Printed for the use
of the Author, 1708.



A SERMON, &c.

XXIII Luke, 39, 40, 41, 42,
43 verses.

39. *And one of the Malefactors which were hang'd, rail'd on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thy self and us.*

40. *But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same Condemnation?*

41. *And we indeed justly, seeing we receive the due Reward of our Deeds; But this Man hath done nothing amiss.*

42. *And he said unto Jesus, Lord! Remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom.*

43. *And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, To day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.*

THE Passage I have read, is, when duly understood, so fruitful a source of *Instruction* and *Comfort* to every true *Penitent*; And yet so liable when misapprehended, to be *abus'd* and *perverted* by such as *wrest the Holy Scriptures*

tures to their own Destruction, that it may be of great Service to the Interest of Religion to explain it, and direct you to the due Improvement of it, and to caution you against any such misapplication of it as wou'd prove extremely dangerous to your own Souls.

It contains indeed a remarkable Instance of a late Convert to Christianity, but such a one whose Conversion was not only Sincere, but produc'd such Eminent Effects and Fruits as were extraordinary and surprizing, and do deserve our most attentive Consideration.

What I shall offer to your Meditation from the Words will be contain'd in the prosecution of the following Observations from 'em, each whereof will be greatly illustrated, by the Example of this late Convert in my Text. From what is here recorded concerning him, we may observe,

I. That true Conversion will appear in the Genuine Exercises and Fruits of Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. That where a Man's Guilt has been very heinous and aggravated, it may be reasonably expected in a Sincere Convert, that the Effects and Fruits of his Repentance and

and Faith shou'd be very remarkable and extraordinary.

III. *There is a Possibility of a Man's being a Sincere, tho' late, Convert, and of such a Convert's obtaining Mercy and Salvation.*

I shall then by way of Application caution you against any perverse and dangerous Abuse of this Doctrine, and direct you to the true Improvement that shou'd be made of it.

I. We may observe from this Passage concerning the Converted Thief, *That true Conversion will appear in the Genuine Exercises and Fruits of Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

'Tis evident to all that consider the present State of our lapsed Nature, That we are under the hainous Guilt of a voluntary *Defection* and *Estrangement* from the Blessed God. Fallen Man has practically disclaim'd God's propriety in him as his absolute Owner, by Living to himself and not to God. He has renounc'd his Allegiance to the Majesty of Heaven his only rightful Sovereign by setting up his perverse and misguided Will in opposition to the Holy Will and Law of God. And he has rejected the Blessed God from being his Chief and Sovereign Good, by preferring the momentary

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momentany pleasures of Sin, and the vain Enjoyments of this World before his Favour and Love, and the Eternal Fruition of him as his only satisfying Portion. He has forsaken God the Fountain of Living Waters, and hem'n to himself broken Cisterns that will hold no Water; II Jer. 13 v.

This being the wretched State and Disposition of fallen Man towards God, it has seem'd meet to his Infinite Wisdom, in order to the bringing back his revolted Creatures to himself, to constitute a Glorious Mediator (viz. his Incarnate Son) and to send him on this Blessed Errand of Reconciling the guilty World to himself. 'Tis in his Attoning Death and Sacrifice that he has contriv'd the marvellous Expedient of Declaring his Righteousness to the World, and rendring the Exercise of his pardoning Mercy consistent with it: So that he appears just (the Hater and Avenger of Sin) at the same time that he is the gracious Justifier of all that believe in his Son.—III Rom. 24, 25. — By him therefore he has publish'd the free Offers of Reconciliation and Peace, of Pardon and Eternal Life to all that return to their offended Father thro' this Blessed Mediator. 'Tis in

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In the Name of Christ that the Apostles were Commission'd to Preach Repentance and Remission of Sins to all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem. — 24 Luke 47. — And that this was a comprehensive Summary of the Gospel they publish'd we may see from that passage of the Apostle Paul, wherein he declares to his Converts at Ephesus, that he had kept nothing back that was profitable to 'em, but had declar'd to 'em the whole Counsel of God, he adds, Testifying both to the Jews and to the Greeks (or Gentiles) Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. — 20 Acts 20, 21 compared with v. 27.

A true Convert then is one that returns to God, as his offended, but reconcilable Father, thro' Jesus Christ as his only Mediator and Peace-maker.

And the Sincerity of his Conversion manifests it self in the genuine Effects and Fruits of his Repentance and Faith.

By Repentance the bent of his Heart is turn'd from Sin, and from this vain World, to the Blessed God; to whom he now freely gives up himself as his absolute Owner and supreme Lord, and only satisfying Portion, resolving to Live to him, to obey and serve him, and seek his final Happiness and Rest in him.

H

And

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And this Change of the Bent of his Heart towards God produces in him an ingenuous *Shame* and *Sorrow* for his past Sins, an humbling Conviction of the terrible Vengeance he has thereby deserv'd, an earnest Application to the infinite Mercy of his offended Father, for the free forgiveness of 'em; and a sincere purpose and stedfast endeavour after new obedience.

By *Faith* he receives *Jesus Christ* as his only *Mediator*, believing the *Truth* of all those Offers of Pardon and Salvation that he came to reveal; relying on the *Efficacy* of his *Death* and *Prevalency* of his *Intercession* for the obtaining those offer'd Blessings; *Consenting* to, and *Complying* with the reasonable *Terms* on which they are offer'd, and particularly that of putting his Neck under the just and gracious Yoke of his Lord Redeemer.

And accordingly we may in this Convert in my Text, observe the genuine *Exercise* and *Fruits* both of *Repentance* towards God and *Faith* in our Lord *Jesus Christ*.

We may observe the genuine *Exercise* and *Fruits* of *Repentance* towards God.

This

This appears in that awful *Reverence* and *Fear* of God that his Soul was now possessed with, and which he reproaches his Fellow-sufferer for the want of. *Dost thou not fear God* (saith he) *since thou art in the same Condemnation?* q,d. Why dost thou upbraid him with his pretended and imaginary Crimes, when the Justice of an offended God is pursuing thee for thy own? Whatever his Case be, thou art conscious to thy self of those heinous Offences that have brought thee to this shameful and painful Death, by the just Laws of Men, and which without deep *Repentance* will expose thee to the dreadful Vengeance of that God, whose *Tribunal* is more awful, whose *Doom* is more formidable, whose *Punishments* are unspeakably more severe and more durable than any *Earthly Judge* can inflict. And we may justly from this seasonable Rebuke to his Fellow-sufferer infer, That his own Soul was possessed with a reverential awe of God, with a most abasing sense of his own guilt before him, with a just *self loathing* and *self-aborrence* for it, and with a deep concern to escape that Wrath and Vengeance of God which he was conscious he had so greatly deserv'd, and stood

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in need of infinite Mercy to shelter him from.

Accordingly he farther Testifies the *Sincerity* of his *Repentance* by owning and vindicating both the *Justice* of God and *Man* in the Sufferings he was now to undergo. *We indeed justly* (saith he) *For we receive the due Reward of our Deeds.* He is far from complaining of the severity of the Sentence, or of the conduct of Divine Providence in bringing him to be thus made a *Spectacle* and *Example* of publick *Justice* for the warning of others. He owns the *Punishment* (how ignominious and painful soever) to be the due *Desert* of his odious *Crimes*, and therefore *justifies* God and *Man* in the infliction of it, meekly kissing the Rod, and humbly *accepting this Punishment of his Iniquity*, being only concern'd to escape the more terrible *Vengeance* of *Eternal Fire*. He therefore penitently *arraigns* and *condemns* himself here, that if possible he may obtain Mercy from an incensed God, and not come into *Eternal Condemnation*.

Nay the genuine *Fruits* of his *Sincere Repentance* appear in his *Zeal* for the Glory of God, and *charitable concern*

cern for the endanger'd Soul of his impenitent Fellow-sufferer.

To this purpose he not only vindicates the just hand of God in their Sufferings, but earnestly endeavours to possess his *Fellow-sufferer* with a just awe and dread of that more terrible Vengeance of his to which he was liable in the other World, and which his continued hardness and impenitency wou'd unavoidably expose him to. He shew'd hereby his Readiness to give *Glo-ry unto God* by his open Confession of his own Guilt, and of his Submission to the Paternal Justice of God in the Punishment of it; and his tender *compassion to the Soul of his Fellow-criminal*, in whose Heart he does his utmost to excite the same *Penitential Sentiments and Affections* that he felt in his own.

Nor was the *Exercise and Effects* of his *Faith in Christ* less remarkable than those of his *Repentance towards God*.

Nay, so conspicuous and eminent were the Fruits of his *Faith*, that what our Saviour elsewhere said concerning the *Centurion* (that was only a *Gentile Proselyte*) I may apply to this Penitent Malefactor, *Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great Faith, no not in Israel.*
Such

Such was the *Faith* of this *Dying Convert*, so clear apprehensions did he discover of the *Messiah's Kingdom*, so full a persuasion of it did he manifest, so open and so glorious a *Profession* did he make of his *Affiance* and *Trust* in him, even in those *Circumstances* that carry'd the strongest *Temptation* to *Infidelity*, as might justly make even the best of his *Disciples* asham'd of their *Doubts* and of the *Weakness* of their *Faith*, in that hour and power of *Darkness*. *Peter* that seem'd the most forward of all the *Disciples* in his *Zeal*, had but newly betray'd his shameful *Weakness* by thrice denying his *Lord* and *Master*. But this *Penitent Malefactor* was so far from being asham'd to own his *Faith* in him, that he openly vindicates his *Innocence* in the *Face* of all his malicious *Enemies*, and bears a publick *Testimony* to the *Righteousness* of his *Person* and *Cause*, even when he saw him suffering under the *Imputation* of the most greivous *Crimes*. We indeed (saith he) receive the due *Reward* of our *Deeds*. But this Man hath done nothing amiss, (Nothing faulty and worthy of such a *Punishment*). He does therefore in effect charge his malicious *Prosecutors* with their horrid
Injustice

Injustice in condemning him for a *Blasphemer* who was truly what he declar'd himself to be, *the Christ or Messiah*, the *Son of God* and *Saviour of the World*; And in adjudging him an *Enemy to Caesar*, because he had own'd himself to be *the King of Israel*, whereas he had taken away all ground to accuse him of *Sedition* against *Earthly Princes* by asserting *That his Kingdom was not of this World*, (and therefore cou'd not interfere) with any just rights of the *Civil Magistrate*. He therefore openly espouses and pleads the *Cause of the Son of God*, against both *Jews and Gentiles* who had conspir'd to condemn him, and by asserting his perfect Innocence he does in effect charge them with the guilt of being the *Murderers of the Prince of Life and the Lord of Glory*. For under that *Character* he considers him, even under these *disgraceful circumstances*, in which *Men and Devils* conspir'd with all imaginable scorn to insult and triumph over him. (As will farther appear in what follows).

The *Disciples* did indeed profess to believe *the Messiah's Kingdom*; But their Minds appear too deeply tinctured with those carnal and low apprehensions of it which the *Body of the Jewish Nation* had

had so deeply imbib'd. They as well as the rest imagin'd the *Messiah* was to be a great *Temporal Prince*, that he wou'd free the *Jews* from the *Roman Yoke*, that he wou'd sit on the *Earthly Throne of David*, and advance the *Jewish Nation* as well as their *Religion* to a State of *External Prosperity and Glory*. They were therefore grievously stumbled and offended, when our Lord forwarn'd 'em of his ignominious *Sufferings and Death*. And *Peter* express'd the real Sentiments of the rest when on that occasion he presum'd to rebuke and expostulate with his Master, saying, unto him, *Be it far from thee Lord, This shall not be unto thee*, 16 *Mat.* 22. And that the Rest were as ignorant in the matter as he, we may plainly see from 9 *Luke*, 44, 45. where our *Saviour* inculcating this Truth upon 'em, *Let these sayings*, (saith he) *sink down into your Ears, For the Son of Man shall be deliver'd into the Hands of Men*, 'Tis added, *But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from 'em that they perceived it not, and they feared to ask him of that saying*. And how far the Faith of the *Disciples* concerning the *Kingdom of Christ* was stagger'd at the view of his ignominious *Sufferings and*
Death,

Death, we may see from what the two *Disciples* that were going to *Emaus* express on that occasion. Having spoken of *Jesus of Nazareth* a Prophet mighty in Deed and Word before God and all the People, whom their Chief Priests and Rulers had deliver'd to be condemn'd to Death and had Crucify'd, they add, But we trusted it had been he which shou'd have redeemed Israel.

24 *Luke* 19, 20, 21.——So doubtfully do they speak of the matter, even after they had heard the credible report of his *Resurrection*. (As we may see from the following Words) so justly does our Saviour upbraid 'em as Fools and slow of Heart to believe all that the Prophets had spoken, at v. 25, Nay, even after the *Resurrection* of *Christ* had reviv'd their hopes of his *Kingdom*, yet that *Question* they propole to him seems to argue that they were not fully cur'd of their too carnal conceptions of it; *Wilt thou at this Time restore the Kingdom to Israel?* 1 *Acts* 6.

But now this late Convert even in the very moment of our Saviour's Sufferings entertains those clear and accurate Notions of his *Kingdom*, and manifests that steadfast Persuasion of it that the Disciples who had so long convers'd with him had not yet attained to. He was persuaded that

his ignominious *Sufferings* themselves were but the *Passage* and *Entrance* into his *Glory*. He foresaw that our *Saviour* wou'd after the short *Scene* of his *Humiliation* was over, begin the *Administration* of that *Spiritual Kingdom*, in which he shou'd have power given him over all *Flesh* that he might give *Eternal Life* to as many as the *Father* had given to him, XVII *John* 2. He was persuaded, That he whom the *Jews* and *Romans* were now *Crucifying* under the character of a vile *Malefactor*, shou'd quickly become the *Lord* and *Judge* of the *Quick* and *Dead*, before whose *Judgment Seat* all must appear and receive their final *Doom*. He foresaw that he who was now *dying*, shou'd live for evermore, and have the *Keys* of *Death* and of the *Invisible World* put into his *Hands*. And therefore he commends his *departing Soul* to him for *Protection* and *Mercy*, when he shou'd be *Enthron'd* at the right *Hand* of the *Father* and have all *Power* in *Heaven* and *Earth* committed to him. Remember me *Lord* (saith he) when thou comest into thy *Kingdom*. " q d. Lord I am a " guilty and despicable *Client* unworthy " of thy *Patronage*, yet let not me be " forgotten when thou that *hangeest* now " on an infamous *Cross*, shall sit down

" on

“ on thy Glorious *Throne*. Let me find
“ a Place among those *Clients* whose
“ Cause thou wilt plead, among those
“ penitent Sinners whom thou wilt pow-
“ erfully save, among those that believe
“ in thee, of whom thou hast said, That
“ they shall not perish but have *Eternal Life*.
“ To thy powerful *Mediation* I commend
“ my guilty Soul; In thy prevalent *In-*
“ tercession I trust and hope; On thy
“ Almighty Power I rely who art able to
“ save to the uttermost all that come to God
“ by thee, and who hast said, Thou wilt
“ in no wise cast out any that come to
“ thee for shelter and refuge. And O
what an eminent Act of Faith was it in
this poor *Malefactor*, to own him for his
Lord whom he now saw expos'd to the
Death of the vilest of Men and meanest
of Slaves! To believe him entitled to
a most Glorious Crown whom he saw
ready to expire on an ignominious Cross!
To expect *Eternal Salvation* from him
over whom his Enemys were insulting
as unable to save himself from such
grievous and reproachful Sufferings!
To look thro' the darkest Scene of his
Abasement and Sufferings, and even then
entertain a believing and joyful prospect of
the Glories of an *Eternal Kingdom*! We

might justly say to him as our *Saviour* did to the *Syro-phenician Woman*, *Great O Man, is thy Faith.* Great indeed when it cou'd surmount all these difficulties and obstacles, when it cou'd pierce thro' all these *dark Clouds*, and so easily and vigorously repel all those strong *Temptations* to *Diffidence* and *Unbelief*.

Nay, once more, We may observe, That whereas the rest of the *Disciples* who (as I suggested) entertain'd too carnal apprehensions of the *Messiah's Kingdom*, were too ready to indulge an *aspiring* and *ambitious* humour (as appears by that eager Debate among 'em. *Who shou'd be greatest in it?* (IX *Mark* 34) On the contrary this late *Convert* discovers that true *Humility* of Mind which our Lord so often and earnestly recommends to 'em as a qualification for the highest *Advancement* there. He is far from offering so *presumptuous* a *Request* as that of the two *Sons of Zebedee*, That he might sit at the right or left hand of *Christ* in his *Kingdom*. No, all that he sues for, is, That *Christ* wou'd remember him when he came into his *Kingdom*. “ q.d. Lord

I am conscious to my self that I deserve no place there. I am utterly unworthy of such a favour or digni-

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“ ty ; yet since thou camest to seek and
 “ save that which is lost, Nay, to save the
 “ chief of Sinners, make me also an Ob-
 “ ject and Monument of thy saving Pow-
 “ er and Mercy. Let me be admitted
 “ into thy Kingdom tho’ as one of the
 “ least there. Remember me, tho’ most
 “ undeserving of thy notice and confide-
 “ ration. Let my hainous guilt be
 “ wash’d away in the Laver of thy preci-
 “ ous Blood. And let thy Merits entitle
 “ me to the Happiness of that Kingdom
 “ which none can claim as a Reward of
 “ Debt, and which I of all Men must
 “ thankfully own to be a Reward of
 “ Grace.

You see then, what a remarkable
Exercise both of *Repentance* and *Faith* the
Conversion of this late *Penitent* was atten-
 ded with, and how noble and excellent
Fruits thereof appear’d in him.

But this leads me to the

II^d. Observation from the Words,
viz. That where a Man’s guilt has been
 hainous and aggravated, it may reasonably
 be expected in a Sincere Convert, that the
 Effects and Fruits of his Repentance and
 Faith shou’d be great and extraordinary.

The Reasonableness hereof is so obvious
 and clear that I need not insist long on
 the

the *Illustration* of it. Who does not see and readily acknowledge that *hainous Guilt* calls for *deeper humiliation* and *sorrow*; and that the *degrees* of our *penitent shame* and *self-aborrence* shou'd bear some *proportion* to the *aggravations* of our *Sins*. How fit is that *Iniquities* of *Scarlet* and *Crimson dye* shou'd open in us all the *springs* of *Godly sorrow*, and draw a *flood* of *penitential Tears* from our *Eyes*! How reasonable is it that those who with *Peter* have *fallen scully* shou'd *weep bitterly*! How becoming is it for a *penitent Magdalene* that had *so much forgiven her*, to express such a *peculiar warmth* of *devout Affection* to her. *Blessed Saviour* in *washing his Feet* with her *Tears*, and *wiping 'em with the Hairs* of her *Head*! VII *Luke* 44.—How fit was it that such a *penitent Publican* as *Zaccheus* shou'd become as *eminent a Pattern* of *generous Charity* as once he had been a *scandalous one* of *Injustice* and *oppression*! XIX *Luke* 8. How becoming was it for a *converted Saul* to become as *Zealous a Preacher* and *Defender* as he had once been a *Destroyer* and *Persecutor* of the *Christian Faith*! How futable that *Peter* when recover'd from his *Fall* shou'd express as *signal Courage* in the *Cause* of

Christ

Christ as once he betray'd of shameful *Weakness*, and that he shou'd actually *seal* that *Faith* with his *Blood* which his *Tongue* had once thro' fear renounc'd !

And accordingly we find something remarkably parallel hereto in the *Case* of this converted *Malefactor*. He had doubtless been engag'd in a very leud and flagitious course of *Life*. 'Tis highly probable, he had never come to any sense of his *Folly* and *Wickedness* before the time of his *Apprehension* and *Condemnation*. Nay, 'tis most probable he had never till now consider'd the pretensions of *Jesus of Nazareth* to be the true *Messiah*, the *Son of God* and *Saviour of the World*. He had a *Life* of great guilt to look upon ; And you see he does it with all that *Shame* and *Self-abbhorrence*, with that *Zeal* in justifying *God*, and those condemning *Reflections* on himself that a holy *Fear* and *Dread* of *God*, and an ingenuous *Hope* of his *Mercy* cou'd inspire him with. And for his *Faith* in our *Blessed Saviour* I have largely shew'd that there was something in the *Exercise* of it very wonderful and extraordinary, very singular and surprising. It must needs appear so, to see a poor *Condemned Criminal* openly owning that *Blessed*

sed Redeemer whom to many his own Disciples had forsaken, and one of 'em had deny'd ! To hear him publicly vindicating his Innocence when they were asham'd or afraid to plead his Cause ! To find him no way staggering at that Cross which had like to have prov'd so dangerous a stumbling-block to them ! To observe him speaking with such Assurance of the Kingdom of Christ at a Time when they were ready to doubt of it ! and so joyfully embracing the Promises of it when their Faith was so ready to waver and sink, and so earnestly aspiring to a share in those future Glories of it, which they had so weak and dubious apprehensions of ! There is I say in all this, something very unusual and astonishing, that highly recommends the Faith of this dying Penitent. So that I think we may truly say, that he did as eminently glorify the Son of God by bearing this illustrious Testimony to him with his dying breath, at this very time of his ignominious Sufferings and Abasement as any that ever seal'd the Faith of a risen Saviour with their own Blood. But having spoken so much on this Head before, I need not now farther enlarge on it. But shall proceed to the

III^d Observation from the Words, viz. That there is a possibility of a late Convert's being a Sincere one, and of such a Sincere, tho' late, Convert's obtaining Mercy and Salvation.

That a Man may be a Sincere tho' late Convert, is manifest from this Example of the Penitent Thief.

I do not indeed see any reason for supposing (as some have done) that his Conversion was of no earlier a date than the very moment of his Sufferings. Nor is that supposition needful to reconcile what the Evangelist Luke here relates concerning him with what the Evangelist Matthew asserts, That the Thieves that were crucify'd with him cast the same in his Teeth. Some indeed to accord these two Relations have imagin'd that the Penitent Thief first joyn'd with the other in Reviling our Blessed Saviour, but upon the sudden Conviction of his Judgement, chang'd his Language and Behaviour. And upon that supposition, there is no appearance of inconsistency and contrariety in what the two Evangelists relate.

But as this supposition is improbable, 'tis unnecessary, Because nothing is more usual then to speak in the plural Num-

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ber, when only the Act of a *single* Person is intended to be express'd. Thus the *Soldiers* are said to bring Vinegar to Christ when *one* of 'em did it.—23 *Luke* 36. and 19 *John* 29. compared with 27 *Matth.* 48.—15 *Mark* 36—— So 'tis said the *Disciples* had indignation——26 *Matth.* 8. when *one* of 'em had so, 12 *John* 4. The utmost that can be reasonably suppos'd is, that the Evangelist *Matthew* might not have had so particular Information concerning this passage, and therefore his omission of it is supplied by the Evangelist *Luke*, as *St. John* has several *Passages* omitted by both. But tho' we shou'd date this Penitent Malefactor's *Conversion* from the Time of his *Apprehension* and *Imprisonment* 'tis sufficient to denominate him a *late Convert*; and what I have already suggested from the Text is sufficient to convince us that he was a *sincere* one, since the *fruits* of his *Conversion* were too *eminent* and *conspicuous* to leave any doubt concerning the *Truth* of it. And this one *Instance* is enough to shew the bare *possibility* of the thing.

And 'tis as clear from this Instance that such a *Sincere* tho' *late Convert* may obtain *Mercy and Salvation*. For the *Answer* given by our *Blessed Lord* to the Request

Request of this dying Penitent, viz. *Verily I say unto thee, This Day thou shalt be with me in Paradise*, plainly shews that his Petition was granted; and our Blessed Lord assures him of a share in the Happiness and Glory of his faithful Followers.

I shall not at present enter into that Dispute whether our Saviour by *Paradise* here mean the *Highest Heavens* themselves, or some *middle Place* and *State* of Rest and Happiness, yet *short* of the *Highest Heavens*. Why I prefer the former Opinion before the latter, (which yet was the common Opinion of the Ancient Christians) I have elsewhere more fully shewn in a distinct *Discourse* on those Words, and shall not now repeat the Arguments then offered to that purpose.

'Tis sufficient at present to observe, That the *Sincere Repentance* and *Faith* of this late Convert were not rejected. But that the marvellous *Riches* of Divine Grace did *superabound* towards him, whose Guilt had so much and so long abounded. And we may thence infer, that in any Case that is truly parallel to this we may expect that the Procedure of the boundless Mercy of God will be the same. And that tho' such late Repentance is very sel-

dom true, yet true and sincere Repentance may in such extraordinary Circumstances be accepted tho' late. Where God has set no express Limits and Bounds to his Infinite Mercy, it wou'd be presumption in us to do it, when His Ways and Thoughts are as far above ours as the Heavens are above the Earth. IV If. 8, 9.

It remains now that we make some Improvement of this practical Passage, and the Observations made thereon.

And here

First, I wou'd Caution you against the common Abuse of this Passage that so many are guilty of, by taking Encouragement from thence to defer their Conversion to the last, to a Sick or Death Bed.

Secondly, I wou'd suggest to you the genuine Use and Improvement we shou'd make of it.

First, I wou'd Caution you against the common Abuse of this Passage that so many are guilty of, by taking Encouragement from thence to defer their Conversion and Repentance to the last, to a Sick or Death Bed.

They are ready to argue, The Thief on the Cross was a true tho' late Penitent; And why may not I become one too in my last Moments? And as his
late

*late Repentance was accepted, so may mine—
And therefore I may without any great
hazard defer it till then.*

I might indeed here shew the *Folly of
Delaying our Return to God at all, and
much more to a Sick or Death-Bed, from
several obvious but solid Considerations that
are commonly and justly alledg'd to this
purpose. I shall but briefly hint at such
as these.*

1. *If our Conversion to God be in it
self most desirable, there can be no Wis-
dom in the Delay of it.*

A *Diseased Patient* is not for protra-
cting a necessary Cure, and is never afraid
of being recover'd and heal'd too soon.
And why then shou'd we desire the con-
tinuance of our *Spiritual Maladys*, as if
we cou'd be *holy and happy* too soon? Can
it ever be too early to regain the favour
of God, and to secure our own Salva-
tion? If not, what reasonable Tempta-
tion can we have to put off our *Repentance
and Conversion* to him?

2. Again, The *Folly of such Delays*
appears in this, *That they serve to no o-
ther end, than to render the great Work
of Repentance more difficult and more bitter
and grievous.*

*They render it more difficult, this they do
strengthen.*

strengthening our vicious Habits and corrupt Inclinations; By weakning the Resistance of our own Consciences, by grieving the Holy Spirit of God, and provoking him to retire from us, and to give us up to the Lusts of our own Hearts.

They render it more bitter, by increasing those Arrears of Guilt, and multiplying those Provocations that will cost us either deep shame and sorrow here, or remediless horror and anguish forever. And every wilful presumptuous Sin will contribute to render the Pangs and Throws of the New birth more piercing and dolorous. And who that believes the necessity of a Sincere Conversion to God wou'd by such delays wilfully increase the difficulties of it? Who wou'd knowingly sow the seeds of inward Remorse and Terror in his own Mind? Who wou'd arm an accusing Conscience with the most grievous and heart-piercing Stings? Why shou'd that necessary Work be delay'd that may be now most easily and comfortably effected, and by delays will be rendered more hard and more painful.

3. Again, *The utter Uncertainty of our Lives does still aggravate the Folly of such Delays.*

How many Thousands are cut off by
such

such sudden *Accidents*, or such violent *Diseases*, as leave 'em no *leisure* or no *capacity* for engaging in that serious and solemn Work of *Repentance* and *Conversion* to God? And who that might by a speedy Return to him put his Eternal Concerns into a safe posture, wou'd from Day to Day run so manifest a risk of remediless and endless Destruction? Can we find nothing but our *Souls* and our *Salvation* to put to such a *desperate venture*, and to leave to such woful *Uncertainties* and *Hazards*?

But leaving these *Considerations* to be farther pursu'd and improv'd in your own Meditations, what I shall now insist on is to shew, That this *Example* of the *Penitent Thief* can give no *reasonable Encouragement* to any Man to defer his *Conversion* to the last, and to put it off to a *Death Bed*.

And to that purpose, I shall briefly suggest the following *Considerations*. As,

1. It shou'd be consider'd, *That this is the only Instance of a late Penitent accepted by God, recorded in all the Holy Scriptures.*

And what *reasonable Encouragement* can this give to defer our *Repentance*, that among so many *Millions* that have perish'd thro' their wilful *Delays*; 'Tis possible

possible that there may be *one* *was* the *late Penitent*, that happily escapes Eternal Destruction. Wou'd it be thought a reasonable Inducement to any *Saylor* to venture upon such *Rocks* or *Sands*, as *Thousands* have been *Ship-wreck'd* upon, that perhaps *one* or *two* for several Ages may have struck upon 'em, and yet *come off* tho' with great *dammmage* as well as *bazard*? We are sure that *Thousands* and *ten Thousands* are by delaying their *Repentance* betray'd into final hardness, and consequently into *Eternal Perdition*; And can it be any just Encouragement to us to run the same desperate risk that there have been some very *few* and *rare Examples* of true tho' *late Penitents*. Sure it shou'd on the contrary deter us effectually from going on willfully in the broad ways of Sin upon pretence of quitting 'em at last, that tho' we cannot say, *Vestigia nulla*, yet we may say, *Vestigia paucæ retrorsum*; That scarce *one* among many *Thousands* of such have ever made a safe *Retreat* from the brink of Destruction.

But farther

2. Let us consider, That as this is but a *single Instance*, so the *Case* of this *late Penitent* in my *Text* seems no way *parallel*

parallel to their's who being convinc'd of the Necessity of Returning to God do willfully defer it to the last.

For any thing we know, his *Repentance* was begun some time ago, during the season of a long *Imprisonment*, while his *Punishment* was delay'd. And so his *Case* has nothing *parallel to their's* that put it off to the last *Extremity*, and to their *dying Moments*. For 'tis improbable to suppose that he shou'd entertain so clear Notions of the *Kingdom of Christ* without some former Instructions about it, and frequent *Meditations* on what the *Scriptures* of the *Old Testament* reveal concerning it. And if this be suppos'd, the very Foundation of those that build their hopes on a *Death-Bed-Repentance* from this Instance, sinks and falls to the Ground.

Again, We have no reason to believe, That this penitent *Malefactor* had ever before this time any such solemn Calls to *Repentance*, any such Discoveries of the Mercy of God thro' a *Mediator*, any such Invitations to return to a reconcileable Father thro' him, as those have who now sit under the Dispensation of the Gospel. His former leud Company and Converse seems to have kept him out the ordinary road of such holy Instructi-
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ons and Counsels, Admonitions and Warnings as we now enjoy. And 'tis probable that our *Saviour's Apprehension* and *Trial* might be the *first opportunity* he had of any Enquiry about his *Person* and *Doctrine*, and the *Kingdom of God* which he came to Preach.

But how vastly different is their Case, who have for many years been follow'd with repeated Exhortations to return to God, who have been enlightned with the Knowledge of Christ by the Gospel of Salvation's long sounding in their Ears; Who have turn'd a deaf Ear to a thousand loud Calls to *Repentance*, Who have long stifled the Convictions of their own Consciences; Who have long resisted the Sollicitations, and quenched the Motions of the Spirit of God! Nay, who tho' warn'd and perswaded of the Necessity of Conversion to God and the danger of Delays do offer the highest Indignity and Affront to him, by putting it off to *Old Age* or a *Death-Bed*! As if they thought the *Refuse* and *Dregs* of their Time to be all that he deserves! As if it were then Time enough to engage in his Service, when they can serve the Devil and their Lusts no longer! As if it were then Time enough

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nough to flee to him when the World fails all their Hopes ! As if a few *Dying Groans*, or a few *Lifeless Prayers* utter'd with their *last Breath*, were all the *Hommage* and *Devotion* that he can reasonably claim ! I am sure such Hypocritical Mockers of God as these can no way pretend their *Case* to be like that of this *late Penitent* in my Text. And for such, that late *Repentance* they pretend to resolve upon, is no better then a vile Diffimulation with God, and hainous Affront to him. And they have all possible reason to fear that he will reject the *Dregs* of their Time when they have wilfully alienated the *Prime* of it from him ; That he will *curse those Deceivers that have a Male in their Flock*, and *wou'd vow and Sacrifice to him a lame and corrupt thing*, 1 *Mal. ult.*—That he will turn as deaf an Ear to all their forced Crys for Mercy and Forgiveness as they have done to all his *Persuasions* and *Invitations to Repentance* ; That he will execute that awful Threatning, *Because I have called and ye refus'd, I have stretch'd out my hand and no Man regarded. But ye have set at nought all my Council and wou'd have none of my Re-proof, I also will laugh at your Calamity and mock when your Fear comes, when your Fear*

comes as Desolation and your Destruction as a Whirlwind, when Distress and Anguish comes upon you. Then shall they call on me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early but shall not find me, &c. 1 Prov. 24, 25, &c.

3. As the Case of this Penitent Malefactor is so different from that of such as wilfully delay their Repentance to the last, so the Effects and Fruits of it appear to be as different.

There was indeed something (as I suggested) very extraordinary and surprizing in 'em.

Such an *Humble Submission* to the *Paternal Justice* of God; Such a *Zeal* for his *Glory*; Such a *tender Concern* for the *Salvation* of his *Fellow Sufferer*; But especially such an *open Vindication* of the *Innocence* of the *Son of God*, when suffering under the false imputation of the blackest Crimes; Such a *Faith* in the *Glories* of his *Kingdom*, when he saw him expos'd to the *Ignominy* of his *Cross*; Such a strong *Persuasion* of his approaching *Exaltation* when he beheld him in his lowest *Abasement*; Such an humble but believing *Recommendation* of himself to the powerful *Mediation* of a dying *Redeemer*, were marvellous Instances of a strong and lively Faith. So that this poor Penitent

nitent had those happy Advantages of *glorifying the Son of God*, that perhaps none ever *had before him*, or ever *will have*, and perhaps he improv'd 'em to a degree that no Man ever did, or ever *will do*.

And what is there *parallel* to this in the pretended *Repentance* of most *dying Persons*? Are those *Prayers* and *Crys* for *Mercy* which nothing but the present fear of *Death* and *Judgment* extort from 'em in their last moments to be compar'd with *this*? Or are they generally any better than the *Howlings* of condemned Malefactors who regret their *Punishment* much more than their *Crimes*, and are not so much sorry that they have *offended* as that they are now like to *suffer for it*? Alas, what is their *Repentance* usually but a faint shew of *Renouncing* their *Sins* when their *Sins* have rather *left them*? What is it but a shew of *fleeing to God* for refuge when every thing forsakes 'em to which they had trusted before? And a promise of engaging in his *Service* when they have no *Time* left for it? What is it but a faint *Wish* that tho' they have wilfully refus'd to *live the Life of the Righteous* they may yet *dye his Death*, and their last end be like his? And how little these slender appearances of *Repentance*

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tance usually signify is manifest from their so often returning to their Sins as soon as their danger is over. And how quickly do their Sick-Bed Vows than prove as the *Morning Cloud* and the *Early Dew* that soon goes away? 4 *Hoses* 6.——But sure any one may see, how little Encouragement the *Example* of this late Penitent in my Text gives any Man to rely on the *validity* and *acceptableness* of such a *Repentance* as this.

4. There seems to be in the Case of the *Penitent Thief* something extraordinary as to the *circumstances of Time*.

It might be congruous to the Wisdom of God at the *Time* of our *Saviour's* *Sufferings* to give such a *singular* and *extraordinary* Instance of the *attoning Vertue* of his *Death* and *Sacrifice*, when it cou'd expiate the *guilt* of so great a *Sinner*, and open the *Kingdom of Heaven* to so late, tho' *sincere* a *Penitent*. And therefore this *Instance* of the *Acceptance* and *Salvation* of so late a *Penitent* is not to be drawn into common *Example*, or made the *Standard* of the *ordinary* methods of *Divine Grace* towards those that live under the clearest *Dispensation* of it.

On all these *Considerations* it appears, That those do grossly *pervert* this *Passage* who

who draw any *Encouragement* from it to *defer* their *Repentance* to the last.

This leads us therefore

II. To consider, *What Use and Improvement we shou'd make of this Passage.*

And

I. We may here see a *Glorious Instance of the marvellous Efficacy of Divine Grace, and Vertue of our Redeemer's Sacrifice.*

How *marvellous*, how *free and sovereign* was the *Efficacy of Divine Grace* that cou'd transform so *hainous a Malefactor* into so *glorious a Confessor*, and of such a *Stone* raise up such a *Son of faithful Abraham*! What is impossible to his *Grace*, who can of so *corrupt a part* of the common *Mass* form to himself such a *Vessel of Mercy*? How did our *Blessed Saviour* in this *Instance* begin the accomplishment of his own *Prediction*, That *when lifted up on the Cross* he *wou'd draw all Men to him*, 12 *John 32*! How *irresistibly* did he draw the *Heart* of this poor *Criminal* that seem'd so little susceptible of such *Divine Impressions* on it?

Nay, here we may see the *Extensive Vertue of our Redeemer's Sacrifice.*

And sure its *propitiatory Vertue* must be *great* indeed, when it cou'd expiate the *guilt* of this *Malefactor's* whole *viti-
tious*

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tious Life, and make *him* whose Sins had been of a *Scarlet* and *Grimson* dye, *white* as *Wool* and *Snow*. Sure the *Merit* of his *Obedience* must be *invaluably great*, who cou'd entitle *one* that deserved *Death* as the *Wages* of so innumerable and great offences, to *Eternal Life*; and cou'd open the *Gates of Heaven* to *one* who had been so long an *Heir of Hell*.

O let us then learn to admire the *Victorious Power* of *Divine Grace*, and the *invaluable Merit* of the Redeemer's *Sufferings* and *Oblation*.

2. We shou'd improve this Passage as an *Argument* to *excite the greatest of Sinners to Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*.

The' Apostle reviewing those *Riches* of *Divine Grace* which he himself had experienc'd, who was once a *Blasphemer* and *Persecutor*, crys out with humble admiration, *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, That Christ came to save Sinners, of whom he was chief,* 1 Tim. I 15. — And to such as have been once the *chief of Sinners*, we may justly propose the boundless extent of *Divine Mercy*, and the all-sufficient *Vertue* of our Saviour's propitiatory *Sacrifice*, as an *Incitement* to return to God by him.

him. What tho' thy Sins be as *Talents* for weight, and as *ten Thousand* for Number, There is with him sovereign compassion to forgive the whole debt upon thy penitent suit and application! What tho' thy *Iniquities* be of the deepest dye, There is attoning Efficacy in the precious Blood of the unblemish'd Lamb of God to wash it away, if thou dost unfeignedly renounce thy Sins, and dost by Faith sprinkle that Blood on thy guilty Conscience. 'Tis only thy *Impenitency* or *Unbelief* that can lay an insuperable bar in the way of Divine Mercy, and render the Redeemer's Propitiation ineffectual to thee. The Sin against the Holy Ghost is therefore unpardonable, because 'tis a Rejection of the only Sacrifice that can take away the guilt of Sin, and of the only Offer that God has made of forgiveness by him. Let then no haughty Sinner that is now truly penitent add to all his other Guilt a despair in the Mercy of God to the truly penitent, and a distrust in the Mediation of that Lamb of God that takes away the Sin of the World. At least, it is every way advisable for such to flee to the only Refuge that is before 'em, to cast themselves down at the Mercy Seat of God on which the Blood of the Mediator is sprinkled, re-

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solving if they *must* perish that they will *perish* there. Such shou'd reason as the Inhabitants of *Ninevah*, *Let us turn every one from his evil way, &c. Who can tell if God will turn and repent and turn from his fierce Anger that we perish not?* III *Jonah*, 8, 9.

3. Let such as have been great Sinners and are now become real Converts consider, *That 'tis justly expected the Fruits of their Repentance and Faith shou'd bear some proportion to the great aggravations of their former Guilt.*

Hainous and abominable Crimes shou'd not be lamented with common measures of shame and grief, but with the deepest *abasement and compunction of Soul*. They shou'd be *bewail'd* if possible with *Tears of Blood*. The more often we have lay'd our selves open to the *condemning Sentence* of God, the more severely shou'd we *arraign and condemn our selves*; And the greater *Treasures of Divine Wrath* we have *heapt up* the more shou'd we *abhor our selves and repent in dust and ashes*; And the more earnestly shou'd we deprecate the severity of God's unallay'd Justice, and flee to his infinite compassions as our only Refuge. The more of our past Time has been alienated from God, the more diligently

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diligently shou'd we redeem the few moments that remain for the glorifying him. The more we *need* the attoning Virtue of the Redeemer's Blood; The more *precious* shou'd he be in our Eyes, who shed it to *wash us* from all our guilt. The more *unworthy* we are of his *Heavenly Kingdom*, the more shou'd we admire his *Grace* that has call'd us to the hope of it; and the more importunately shou'd we recommend our selves to the *merciful Remembrance* and favourable regard of him that is the great *Lord of the invisible World*, and the *Arbiter of our Eternal Lot* there. Nay, the more we owe all our Expectations of an Eternal Reward to the *Grace of God thro' his Merits*, the more solicitous shou'd we be to become his *peculiar People Zealous of Good Works*. We shou'd be studious to do all that's possible to express our ardent gratitude to him, by asserting his *Cause*, promoting his Interest, and advancing his Glory, that he may *remember and receive us* into his *Eternal Kingdom*, and admit us as he did this *sincere tho' late Penitent* in my Text into the *joys of his Heavenly Paradise. Amen!*

I might add,
 4. Let us not give over our prudent
 and compassionate Attempts for Reclaim-
 ing and Recovering hainous Sinners
 from an utter despair of Success. We
 know not how far the Efficacy of Di-
 vine Grace may prevail to turn a disobe-
 dient Sinner to the Wisdom of the Just.
 Nor how large the Extent of Divine
 Mercy may be in multiplying to forgive
 where a Sinner has multiply'd to offend.
 Let us then while there is any hope,
 Nay, any possibility of Success, endeavour
 to turn Sinners from the Error of their
 way, that we may save a Soul from Death,
 and hide a multitude of Sins. *V James*

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CHARGE
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RICH:

FROM
I Tim. VI. 17, 18, 19.

By J. B.

D U B L I N:

Printed for the use of the Author,
1708.

CHARGE

TO THE



1781

B. J. B.

DUBLIN:

Printed for the use of the Admiralty.
1781

A SERMON, &c.

I Tim. VI Chapter 17, 18, 19
verses.

17. Charge them that are rich in this World,
that they be not high-minded, nor trust in
uncertain Riches, but in the Living God,
who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.

18. That they do good, that they be rich in
good works, ready to distribute, willing to
communicate.

19. Laying up in Store for themselves a
good Foundation against the Time to come,
that they may lay hold on Eternal Life.

TIS one of the general Directions
which the Apostle Paul gives to this
Evangelist Timothy, That he shou'd study to
shew himself approved unto God, a Work-
man that need not be ashamed, rightly divi-
ding the Word of Truth, Tim. 2. 15. And
accordingly, 'Tis the Design of the Apo-
stle in both these Epistles to instruct him,
how he shou'd apply himself to the diffe-
rent Ranks and Sorts of Persons he had
to do with. And my Text contains his
particular Instructions in what manner, and
with

with what particular *Counsels* and *Advice* he shou'd apply himself to those that are *Rich in this World*.

The Apostle plainly supposes that he might have some such *Rich Persons* under his Pastoral Inspection and Care. 'Tis true indeed he elsewhere tells us, *That not many wise Men after the Flesh* (i. e. Not many Worldly Politicians) not many *Mighty*, not many *Noble* are call'd, 1 Cor. 1. 26. Intimating how rare it wou'd be to find *Greatness* and *Goodness* in a happy conjunction, and to see those that had ample *Possessions* on Earth become the eager *Candidates* of the *Heavenly Inheritance*; Yet blessed be God, he does not say, that *none such are called*. For on the contrary, where the Profession of Christianity has the Establishment and Countenance of Human Laws, and even *Princes* themselves lay their *Scepters* at the *Foot of Christ*, We may not only expect that a regard to *Interest* and *Credit* will oblige the generality of the *Rich* as well as the *Poor* to espouse so reputable a Profession, but that some will embrace it in *Sincerity*, and not only wear the fashionable *Livery* of Christ, but become his *unfeigned Followers*. 'Tis true indeed 'tis but comparatively a very *few* of the *Rich* and

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and *Great* that have any more of *Christi-*
anity than the empty *Name* and *Title*.
The most of 'em put off *God* with their
Knee while the *World* has their *Hearts* ;
God has their complemental and lifeless
Devotions, but *Mammon* the vigorous
Service of their *Lives*. And no wonder,
when our Blessed Saviour has represented
their *Temptations* to be so great and
strong, and on that account spoke of
their *Salvation* as a matter so extreamly
difficult, in terms that ought to startle and
awaken their *Consciences* to the strictest
jealousy and caution. 'Tis easier (saith
he) for a *Camel* (or *Cable-Rope*) to pass
thro' the *Eye* of a *Needle* (a Proverbial
Speech to represent what was seemingly
impossible, and at best exceeding *difficult*
and *rare*) then for a *Rich Man* to enter in-
to the *Kingdom* of *God*. XIX *Mat.* 24.

And this very *Consideration* suggests
to us, That as the *Advice* in my *Text*
is very proper for *such*, so 'tis what the
most of their *Quality* and *Rank* greatly
need to have often lay'd before 'em, and
with the greatest earnestness inculcated
upon 'em.

Since therefore this *Instruction* given
by the *Apostle* to *Timothy* is in effect gi-
ven to every particular *Pastor*, I shall in
N pursuance

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purfuance of the Obligations thereb lay'd on my ſelf, apply my ſelf to you that are *Rich in this World* with the particular *Charge* here mention'd in my Text, and enforce upon your Conſciences the practice of thoſe important Duties which are ſo particularly ſuited to your *Rank and Station*, your *condition and circumſtances* in the World.

Accordingly there being no occaſion to form the Words into any *Doctrinal Propoſition*, I ſhall in treating of 'em, conſider the following *Heads*.

I. *To whom this Advice muſt be addreſt?* viz. *the Rich of this World.*

II. *By whom?* By *Timothy* here, and conſequently by every *faithful Diſpenſer of the Goſpel*.

III. *Under what Notion the Advice is to be addreſt to 'em?* viz. That of a *Charge*.

IV. The *Duties* themſelves which are to be thus urg'd and enforc'd upon 'em, viz. *That they be not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain Riches, but in the Living God, &c. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, &c.*

Of theſe in their order, And

I. Let us conſider, *To whom this Advice muſt be addreſt?* viz. *To the Rich in this World.*

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If you ask me, *Who* they are that come under this *Character* and *Denomination*? I Answer, That the *Character* is of large *Extent*, and admits of very different *Degrees*; For the *same Person* may in respect of those that have *vast Possessions* be comparatively *poor*, who yet in respect of those that have no visible means of Subsistence and are reduc'd to extream Straits may be justly accounted *Rich*. And this ought to be carefully consider'd, because we find many, that tho' they wou'd take it for a great Affront to be thought *Poor*, yet when we come to urg such Duties as some of these in my Text upon 'em, will readily excuse themselves, and pretend that this *Charge* belongs only to the *Rich*, and by these they understand only *Persons of eminent Quality* and *vast Estates*. And thus they easily shift off the Duty from themselves, and are very willing to quit the *Character* of being *Rich*, when the *Title* is like to become *chargeable*, and the Statutes of Heaven have lay'd such a *Tax of Charity* upon it. But such must not think to escape so easily the reach of this *Charge*. For to be *Rich* being only a *comparative Title*, We may justly extend it to all, that besides what is not only barely and absolutely *necessary*, but even *convenient*

convenient for Persons in their Rank and Station in the World, have something to spare, be it *more* or *less*, which they are capable of laying out in *doing good*. 'Tis true indeed that the *Degrees* of Mens *liberality* must bear proportion to the *measure* of what they can *spare* from all *necessary* and *convenient* Expences; To whom *much* or *little* is committed (which after all we are allow'd to lay out in providing for our *selves* and *ours*, we have yet remaining as a *superplus*) of *them* will be the *more* or *less* be required. (As I shall have occasion to shew more fully afterwards). And truly when we consider, How much a great many among us go *above* their Rank and Condition in the costliness of their Habit, their Furniture, and their way of Living, we may justly infer, That if those *Expences* were duly *regulated*, they wou'd so far be *Rich* as to be in a capacity of *doing good*, and consequently that they do come within the reach of this *Charge* in my Text. 'Tis not so much for want of *Riches* that they are not *liberal*, but because they *mispend* that on *Superfluities* that shou'd be *redeem'd* for this excellent purpose.

Having thus far consider'd to whom this Advice is address'd, I proceed to consider,

II. By

II. *By whom this Advice is to be given?*
&c. And

III. *Under what Notion is it to be given?*

I put these 2 *Query's* together, because I wou'd conjoyn 'em in the *Answer*.

Answer, The *Advice* is to be given by *Timothy*. And consequently every *Christian Pastor*, every *authorized Dispenser of the Gospel*, is both warranted and oblig'd to urg these Duties on all those under their Charge that are *rich in this World*. Nay, the Apostle gives this Instruction to *Timothy* who was but a *young Preacher*, and whom the Apostle on that very account thought it needful to caution his Flock against *despising*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 12. And even this *young Timothy* is not only empower'd to *advise* the *Rich* to these Duties, but to deliver his *Advice* by way of *solemn Charge* *παρρησια* q.d. Earnestly admonish 'em, vehemently urg 'em to the following Duties. The Apostle seems here aware of the usual Temper of the *Rich*; Both that the *Duties* themselves are such as they are difficultly persuaded to comply with, and that they in their *Vanity* and *Pride* expect that all others shou'd address themselves to 'em with great *Ceremony* and *Respect*, especially when they come to 'em on so unwelcome an

an Errand as that of recommending to 'em the Exercise of their *Liberality* and *Charity*. Those they reckon ought to treat 'em with very soft words, and appear very modest and shy who apply themselves to 'em on that Subject. They must come to 'em in the Language of *Supplicants*, or at most propose what they have to say by way of humble *Advice* and *Intreaty*, if they expect to prevail with 'em. And therefore it may seem at first view, as if the Apostle had not given *Timothy* prudent *Advice* and *Instructions* how to deal with 'em. But if we examine the matter more narrowly, we shall find that the Apostle's Expressions in his Direction to *Timothy* are very *emphatical* and *well-weigh'd*. q d. I foresee these *Duties* are such as *Rich Persons* do not love to hear much of; Therefore be the more warm and earnest in pressing 'em thereto. And whereas that *Duty* of *Liberality* is what they are prone to mistake as if it were a matter of *indifferency*, a meer *Counsel* which tho' it may be commendable for 'em to take, yet there is no *Sin* or *Danger* in *Neglecting*; On the contrary charge it upon their *Consciences* as their *Indispensible Duty*, and with all *Ministerial Authority*

ity urg 'em to the performance of it. And indeed, We are abundantly warranted to use this freedom and plainness with the Rich, not only by the Authority of this great Apostle, but by the Authority of God himself, whose Messengers we are, and whose Orders and Commands we must deliver to the Rich as well as to the Poor, the one being as truly the Subjects of God as the other.

And having in these particulars shewn, To whom I am authorized to deliver this Charge, and what clear Warrant I have for it, I proceed,

IV. To the main thing, viz. *The Charge it self, viz. That they be not high-minded, &c.*

And in this Charge, There are some Duties to be urg'd upon 'em, that more immediately concern themselves and the inward Actings of their own Souls; There are others, which more directly refer to others, especially their indigent Brethren.

First, There are some Duties that I must urg on the Rich that more immediately concern themselves and the inward Actings of their own Souls.

And those are two :

- I. *That they be not high-minded.*
- II. *That they trust not in uncertain Riches, but in the Living God, &c.*

I. I

I. I wou'd apply my self to the *Rich* with this *Charge*, That they be not *high-minded*, &c. *μη υψιφροσύνη.*

And sure we cannot imagine any *Caution* more *necessary* to 'em. than this. There is nothing the generality of Men are more prone to value themselves upon than their *External Condition*. Their *Minds* swell with their *Estates*, and they are prone to look on every *accession* to their *Riches* as an *Addition* to their merit and *value* in the World. No sooner do they in this point stand upon *higher Ground* than others, but they quickly regard 'em as their *inferiors*, and look down upon 'em with a haughty disdain. And how readily does this Pride of their Hearts discover it self, in *taking State* upon 'em, keeping others at a great distance, and affecting to distinguish themselves from 'em by the *Luxury* of their *Garb*, of their *Houses* and *Furniture*, of their *Table* and *Expences*. They are prone to entertain overweening thoughts of themselves on the account of the *figure* they make, and the *Pomp* and *Splendor* they live in. 'Tis very hard to keep their *Minds* humble and low, when their *condition* is *exalted* and *flourishing*.

Let

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Let me then enforce this Caution upon all of you that are *Rich*, that you be not *high minded*.

And there are various Considerations I may offer, to enforce this Caution, which I shall but briefly suggest.

1. Consider, *That you owe this difference in your External Condition from that of others to the meer good pleasure of God.*

Some boast of the *Advantages* of their *Birth* and *Descent*, But the Scripture tells us, *That God has made all Nations of one Blood.* And we are sure, that all come alike *naked into this World.* And if either thine *Ancestors* have *acquir'd* an Estate that is entail'd on thee, or thou hast *acquir'd* it thy self, they or thou owe the Success of their Endeavours to his Blessing, who alone gives power to get *Wealth*, VIII Deut. 18. And if thou ascribest that to thy power or skill, which is the effect of God's distinguishing favour, thou dost but betray thine Ignorance and Ingratitude in thus Sacrificing to thy own Net and burning Incense to thy own drag, See 8 Deut. 17, 18. So that I may reason in reference to those that are putt up with these Blessings of God's common Providence, as the Apostle does with reference to more excellent Gifts, Who makes thee to differ from another?

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And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, Why dost thou Glory as if thou hadst not receiv'd it? 1 Cor. 4, 6, 7.

2. Consider, *That Riches imply no real intrinsick worth in them that possess 'em.*

The Scripture tells us, *That Riches are not always to Men of Understanding, many owing their acquisition of 'em far more to Time and Chance, than to any peculiar Wisdom or Policy, IX Eccles. 11. An Ass may be loaded with Golden Trappings. And a rotten Post may be richly Gilded. Many a Brutish Sensualist is cloth'd in Purple and fine Linnen and fares sumptuously every day, while a pious Lazarus stands begging at the Door, XVI Luke 19, 20. That is a very poor and contemptible honour that a Man borrows from his gay Cloths and gold Ring, or from his Lands and Possessions when he has no Noble God-like Endowments or Qualitys to enrich and adorn his Soul. Why then shoudst thou look down with a proud Contempt on all that are below thee in Estate and Wealth, when perhaps there are thousands of 'em, that far more excel thee in all truly valuable Excellencies, especially in those inestimable Treasures of Wisdom and Holiness? Why shou'dst thou be exalted and puffed up on the*
the

the account of that, which does not render thee one jot the more *acceptable to God*, or the more *valuable in the Esteem of any wise and considerate Man*? Shall any of us be proud of being *Rich* when the *Son of God* condescended to become so *Poor* that *he had not where to lay his Head*? In a word, *Riches* are but *adventitious things*, and are often the Possession of the *vilest of Men*; And nothing can argue greater ignorance of *real worth*, Nay, nothing can be a more suspicious Sign that we *want* it, than to be *high-minded* on the account of 'em. Let the *Rich* then learn to undervalue this small advantage they have above the *Poor*, (who perhaps may have greater advantages of another and better kind) and according to the Apostles Instruction elsewhere, instead of *minding high things*, *condescend to Men of low Estate*, 12 Rom. 16.

3. Consider, *That your Riches instead of puffing you up with Pride shou'd rather inspire you with Humility and awful Fear.*

What shall we be *high minded*, because we have a *greater Number of Talents* committed to us, and consequently a more *awful and strict account* to give up than others? Shall we be *proud* because our

Temptations to Sin, and our Diversions from Holiness are stronger, and our Salvation more difficult and improbable than that of others? Shall we be Proud to be found among the Number of those of whom the Scripture tells us, that so few comparatively are call'd to be Rich in Faith and Heirs of Heaven? 1 Cor. 1. 26. compar'd with II James 5. Or rather shou'd not the Consideration hereof make us tremble at the apprehensions of the greater hazard that our Souls and our everlasting concerns are in?

4. Once more, Let us consider, *How soon this Distinction of Rich and Poor will cease forever. And shall we be Proud of those Treasures that we enjoy in this World that can carry none of 'em out of it? Shall we despise those our poor Brethren now with whom Death will so soon level us and lay our Heads as low as theirs? Shall we affect to keep those at a great distance from us here, who shall e're long stand on equal Terms with us at the Bar of God? And who are even here as truly ennobled by his Grace, and interess'd in his Favour, and entituled to his Kingdom as we our selves profess or hope to be? Divine Love shou'd bring those to a greater Equality in point of*

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of Affection and Respect, who are equal in all Spiritual Priviledges and Heavenly Hopes.

But

II. I come to the next Branch of this Charge to the Rich, viz. That you trust not uncertain Riches, but in the Living God, who gives us all things richly to enjoy.

We may be said to Trust in that, which we chiefly depend on for our Welfare and Happiness. And the Rich we know because their Wealth procures 'em most of the desirable Accommodations of this Life, are very prone to idolize it, and to think that they have sufficiently provided for their own Happiness, when they have lay'd up a plentiful Fund of this kind. When their Barns or their Coffers are full, they are then ready to say with the Rich Man in the Gospel, Soul take thine ease, Eat, Drink, and be merry, for thou hast Goods lay'd up for many years, XII Luke 19. Thus they do (as Job speaks, XXXI Job 24, 25) make Gold their hope, and fine Gold their confidence, They rejoyce because their Wealth is great, and because their hand has gotten much, XXXI Job 24, 25. And Alas while their Worldly prosperity continues, how prone are they to forget and neglect

neglect the Blessed God ! How little do they regard his favour, and place their entire dependence thereon for their Present and Eternal Welfare ! How careless and negligent are they in *seeking the Kingdom of God, and in laying up incorruptible Treasures there !* How willing to take up with their *Portion in this Life,* and how cold in their desires and pursuit of an unseen and future happiness !

But let me caution you against this inexcusable Folly. *Trust not in uncertain Riches, but in the Living God, who gives us all things richly to enjoy.* Place all your hopes of solid Happiness both *here and hereafter* on God alone as the true Spring of it. Let him be to your Souls the only Centre of their Contentment and Rest ; And to that purpose I shall only offer these 2 Arguments to your serious Thoughts.

i. Consider, *That even your present Happiness and Contentment in this World depends more on the favour of God, than upon any Earthly Store.*

So that if you look't no farther than *this World,* it were great folly to depend on your *Riches* for that *Satisfaction* that God only can give. Cou'd you secure the continued possession of your *Wealth*

as long as you live, yet that wou'd no way secure your *inward Contentment and Happiness*. You may have a rich affluence of Temporal Blessings with a secret *Curse* that will *blast* all the real *comfote* of 'em. Your *full Cup* may by the Providence of God be mix't with many *bitter ingredients*. A Righteous God may visit you with those Bodily Afflictions that will quickly spoil the pleasure of all your Enjoyments. And you'l find that a Bed of Down will give but little ease under violent and racking pains. Or you may meet with those *disappointments* and *crosses* from your *Relations* that will rob you of that satisfaction you might otherwise take in these Enjoyments. Or you may by God's Judgment upon you for your *idolizing* your Riches be given up to that great Evil that Solomon speaks of, i. e. *Of having Riches and Wealth and Honour, and yet not have Power to eat thereof, but to leave it to Strangers to eat thereof, 6 Eccles. 1, 2.* You may by a strange *Curse* even deny your selves the comfortable conveniences of Life thro' an unaccountable fear of lessening your Store, and almost *starve* in the midst of *Plenty*. 'Tis God that not only *gives Riches* but *a power to eat thereof,*

thereof, and to take your portion, and to rejoyce in your Labour. This (saith the Wise Man, 5 Eccl. 19.) is the Gift of God.

But besides this, Alas you have no security for the continuance of your Wealth it self which you are so apt to lay the stress of your hopes for present Happiness upon. You trust in uncertain Riches, in that deceitful Mammon that so often deludes the Expectations of it's Idolatrous Votarys. You forsake God the Fountain of Living Waters, and have recourse for your supply to broken Cisterns. For really the favour of the Living God is to the poorest Saint a far better Security for all the needful Provisions of this Life, than the largest Possessions, or fullest Coffers are to the Rich Worldling. For Earthly Riches are but fugitive things, which when we think we grasp the fastest, make to themselves Wings and flee away to new Owners. And to trust in them is to set our Hearts upon that which is not. Those Treasures which fill thy Chests may soon become the Prey of the secret Thief or the open Plunderer. Thy rich Garments are such as the Moth will consume. Thy Stately Houses are not proof against the violence of Fire that may

may quickly turn 'em into *Ashes*. Nay, thou hast no *Security* of thy *Lands* themselves, unless thou could'st secure thyself from the *open violence* of *War*, or from the no less dangerous violence of *unjust* and *corrupt Judges*. We have often seen great *Estates* prove the occasion of their *Owner's Ruin*, by exposing 'em to the *Envy* of *powerful Oppressors*. He that has the favour of *the Living God* to depend on for his present *Subsistence* and *Support*, has a *firm Foundation* of his *Trust*; He has a *Fund* to go to that can never be *exhausted*, a *Spring* that can never be *drawn dry*. He can either bless those that thus depend on him with a rich affluence of *Worldly Possessions*, or can make that *little* they enjoy far better to 'em *then the Riches of many Wicked*, 37 Ps. 16. Whereas if we *trust in these uncertain Riches* to the neglect of *God*, He whose bounty now *gives us all things richly to enjoy*, may in just displeasure *blast that Wealth* that is the prop of our vain confidence; He may cause that *Gourd* to *wither* under which we sit with such contentment, and convince us by woful Experience, that we held all our Possessions by the *tenure* of his abused Goodness, who may *justly take away* what we so *unjustly idolize*.

But

2. Consider, *How unfit those Riches are to be the Objects of your Trust and Hope that can signify nothing to the securing your future Happiness.*

And indeed; nothing can be more amazing and unaccountable than the folly of miserable Worldlings, who think they have made sufficient Provision for their happiness, when they have acquir'd a large Estate, or lay'd up a rich Stock and Store. Alas Man! Art thou so vain as to hope that thou shalt live here for ever! Or dost thou expect to carry thy *Lands* or thy *Treasures* with thee to an unknown Eternal World? Canst thou transmit 'em by *Bills of Exchange* into those *invisible* and *distant Regions*? Or couldst thou do it, what wou'd those signify to the Relief of thy separated Soul, that has now no occasion for *Meat* and *Drink*, no capacity to enjoy *Sensual Pleasures* and *Delights*? Wou'd all thy *Treasures* signify any thing to *purchase the Heavenly Inheritance*, or to *bribe the Justice* of a Sin-avenging God, or even procure *one drop of Water* to cool thy (inflamed) *Tongue*? Cou'd they contribute in the least to assuage the horrors of an enraged *Conscience*, or to give thee any ease from the *gnawings*

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gnawings of the Immortal Worm, and from the violence of the unquenchable Fire? Alas, Thou canst not but know, that all these thy present Possessions must be left behind; Thy Soul must launch out naked into an unseen Eternity, where Gold and Silver are of no Price. And there if thy past Riches cou'd yield thee any Comfort or Relief, 'tis not that part of 'em which thou hast lay'd up, but that which thou hast lay'd out for God; 'Tis not that Portion of thy Substance which thou hast left behind, but that which thou hast honour'd God with by expending it for him.

And this shou'd fully convince all of us, that there is none proper to be the Object of our Trust and Hope for solid Happiness but the Living God. He that has chosen God for his Portion has indeed made a solid provision for being blessed for ever. He has chosen that better part that shall never be taken from him, X-Luke 42. He has secur'd an indefeizable and incorruptible Inheritance, when all Earthly Possessions must be left behind; He has Eternal Mansions prepared for him, when he must dislodge out of this Earthly Habitation; Nay, he has a House not made with Hands Eternal in the Heavens for the reception of his Immortal Spirit

When this *Earthly Tabernacle* shall be dissolved, when this *House of Clay* shall moulder into that *Dust* in which its *Foundation* was lay'd. So that well might the *Psalmist* when he had pronounc'd that *People* happy that enjoy'd a large measure of *Temporal Prosperity*, add by way of just *Corrective*, *Happy is the People whose God is the Lord.* 144 Ps. 15. That *Living God* can be the overflowing *Eternal Spring of Life* and *Light of Joy* and *Felicity* to us, when all *Earthly Riches* shall be either *dead to us* or *we to them*. O let us not then *trust in uncertain Riches*, but in that *Living God*, who can give us all things richly to enjoy here, if it be best for us; And in the final fruition of whom we shall enjoy all the good we can desire or partake of.

I come then

Secondly, To consider that part of the *Charge* here given to the *Rich* that refers to others, viz. That they shou'd do good, be rich in good Works, ready to distribute, and willing to communicate, and this in order to their laying in Store a good *Foundation* against the Time to come, and their laying hold on *Eternal Life*.

This last *Clause*, I shall only consider, as an *Argument* and *Motive* to enforce the

the *Charge*, for so it seems chiefly intended by the Apostle here.

For the *Charge* it self, viz. *To do good, to be rich in good Works, to be ready to distribute, and willing to communicate*, it imports a *Duty* that needs little to be explain'd to the *Rich*, tho' it greatly needs to be enforce'd upon their Consciences.

You can none of you be ignorant what the Apostle does in these Words require. Every one knows that the *good Works* which the Apostle enjoyns we shou'd be rich in, are such wherein our Riches may be serviceable to promote the welfare of the *Bodies* or the *Souls* of Men.

As to the welfare of Men's *Souls*, 'tis an excellent *Work* to encourage the Gospel, to promote the diffusion of that saving Light to the dark Corners of the Land, to support those that labour therein from sinking discouragements and pressing necessities; To distribute *Bibles* and other *Books* of Instruction and Devotion among the Poor that have either no Money to buy 'em, or perhaps no heart to lay out that way what they can ill spare out of the small pittance they have to subsist upon. And indeed our Blessed Saviour intimates to us of how valuable account
such

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such *Works* as these are in his Eye, when he tells us, That *he that receives* (i. e. entertains, supports, and encourages) *a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet shall receive a Prophet's Reward.* Where he not only intimates, that the *Reward* of a faithful *Prophet* (i. e. of one that is *industrious* and *wise* to win Souls and to turn many to *Righteousness*) shall be great, but that those who thus contribute towards the success of his Labours shall as it were be *entitled* to all his good *Works*, and share in the glorious *Reward* of 'em, See X *Matth.* 41.

As to the *Bodies* of Men, I need not tell you how serviceable your *Riches* may be to promote the Temporal Welfare of your indigent Brethren ; You have many ways of doing 'em good ; 'Tis a God-like Work to be a *Father* to the *Fatherless*, and a *Protector* to desolate *Widows* ; To feed the *Hungry* and cloth the *Naked*, to relieve the pressing necessities of those that are reduc'd to extreme Straits ; To buoy up a declining pious Family, and by seasonable succour prevent their sinking into pinching Necessities ; To furnish those with Advantages for being brought up to live by their own industry, who are otherwise like to be expos'd

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pos'd thro Idleness and Poverty to all manner of grievous Temptations. We can none of us want manifold opportunities for such good Works as these if we wou'd either seek for 'em, or lay hold of 'em, when they are offer'd to us. For the Wisdom of the great God (who cou'd have levell'd the World, and given every Man an equal Portion) has therefore seen meet to permit so great a difference in Mens External Condition as that of the Rich and the Poor, in part for this very end, that as Men's Poverty is a fit occasion for the Exercise of many particular Graces, (such as strict *Honesty* and *Truth* under the Temptation of pinching want, *Submission* to the Divine Will by contentment with their lower Condition, and chearfully stooping to the Duties of it, dependance on the care of God when they have no visible Fund to rely on for their daily Bread, &c). So on the other hand, the Riches that others enjoy are a fit occasion for their Exercise of that Excellent and God-like disposition of *Universal Goodness*. Such are capable of a very Noble Imitation of that Blessed Being, by becoming *Benefactors to Mankind*, and *publick Blessings* in the World. Such have a great advantage for

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for that most Divine and Delightful Work of doing good. And 'tis on that account chiefly that our Saviour tells us, *'tis a more blessed thing to give then to receive,* 20 Acts 35.

Having thus briefly suggested what God does expect from you that are *Rich*.

I now proceed to enforce this solemn *Charge* upon your Consciences, and to that end shall only lay before you the following Considerations.

1. Consider, *That you are but Stewards of your Riches, That the Blessed God the great Proprietor, has order'd your thus laying 'em out, that you cannot refuse it without rendring the account you must give to him very terrible.*

I joyn these together,

Consider I say, *That you are but Stewards of the Riches you possess, but God is the Sovereign Owner and Proprietor of 'em. You have only a Subordinate Right and Interest in 'em; They are his Corn and his Wine, his Silver and Gold. They are Talents that he puts into your hands, which you are not allow'd to dispose of at your pleasure and will, but according to his Orders and Instructions.*

And here you have his positive *Orders and Instructions* in my Text. We are authorized

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authorized in God's Name to *charge* you that you *honour him with your Substance*, That according to the Number of Talents of this kind committed to you you lay 'em out in doing good, that you be *rich in good Works, and ready to distribute, and willing to communicate.*

I know indeed there is some difficulty in applying this *general Rule* to *particular cases*, and in stating the *measure and proportion* of what every Rich Man ought to lay out. For indeed, there is so vast a difference in the particular circumstances of Persons with reference to their *Families and Relations*, their *Station and Place* in the World, &c. that it were perhaps next to impossible to lay down any *Rules* that will reach and accurately determine every Man's *Quota and Proportion*. For tho' we read of pious *Jacob's* vowing to *give back to God the Tenth part of all he had*, 28 Gen. 22. Yet doubtless that *proportion* is on the one *band* more than *some* can spare that have numerous *Families*, and on the other *far less* than *others* ought really to *give*, who have comparatively little charge. And perhaps the Wisdom of God has therefore contented it self with such *general Commands* of *doing good*, without descending

to any *particular Rules* for deciding every Man's Rate and Quota, because he wou'd hereby try the *ingenuity* of our Disposition. God loves a *cheerful Giver*, and regards more the inward *Disposition* and *Affection* of the Man, than the *meer Gift* it self. Were every *Rich Man* told *how much* he must give, what he gives wou'd look rather like an Act of *Necessity* that *meer sense* of Duty extorted from him, than a matter of *choice* and a *free will-offering*, which he is prompted to by those ingenuous principles of *Love to God* and *love to Men*. Whereas these *general Commands* the Application whereof is left to every *Rich Man's* Conscience, are a proper *Test* and *Trial* of his inward Disposition, how far such God-like Love prevails and reigns in his Heart. For according to the measure of that will the measure of his Bounty usually be. *The liberal Man* (he that is so in his Heart) *will devise liberal things*. And when his *Heart* is enlarg'd with goodness, there is no fear of his being *strait-banded* according to his real ability.

O let me then add, That if you follow not these positive *Orders* and *Instructions* of God in *laying out* your *Riches*, your account of 'em will be dreadful and

A Charge to the Rich. 115

and terrible. Alas, some I fear do with this particular Talent just as the slothful Man did with his, that buried it in the Earth, and thought he gave a fair account of it when he cou'd say, *Master, here take what is thy own.* They think it enough that they have not spent their Substance in riotous Living, and like the Prodigal thrown it away upon Harlots. Or at most they think that a few Pence or Shillings now and then dropt into the Poor Box will be enough for 'em, tho' they have many hundreds a year. Nay, some of 'em not so much as Children to leave it to. But such shou'd know and consider, that this account will not be accepted by God, who will censure him for a wicked Servant that has thus hid his Talent in a Napkin, or hoarded it in his Chest. He will not take a Widow's mite at that Man's hand, who might give liberally out of his abundance. If a Man have hundreds or thousands a year, and have himself no occasion for expending the 4th, 5th, or the 6th part of it, can he expect it will be a good Account of the rest, that instead of laying it out in doing good, he has (excepting some small and inconsiderable pittance) lay'd it all up to make new Purchases

chases, and to *add Field to Field*, as if he were ambitious to *be placed alone in the Earth* (as the Prophet speaks of such covetous Persons, V *Is.* 8).

Perhaps such may quiet their Consciences by pretending their good Designs to leave something considerable at their *Death* to such good Uses. But they shou'd consider, that this is but a sorry Argument that they either *love God* or *trust him*. How do those show that they *love him*, who will not *honour him with their Substance* while they can keep it themselves, and are then only willing to give it to him, when they can hold it no longer! How do these shew their *Trust in him* that dare not depend on his present Promises of rewarding their liberality by increasing their Store, and will therefore never part with it out of their hands while they are in a bare possibility how remote soever of wanting it themselves! And I take it to be a just Observation founded on common Experience, that where such *Rich Persons* refuse to honour God with their Substance during their Lives he seldom allows them the honour of disposing well of it at their Death. The sordid *Miser's* Baggs do by a just Providence often fall into the hand

hand of a *Prodigal*, that quickly squanders upon the *Lusts of the Flesh* what the other hoarded up so long for no other use then to feed the *Lust of his Eye*, which in this sense was never *satisfied with seeing*. And O wretched and deplorable is that Rich Man's case that has left that Wealth to be the pernicious occasion of the *damnation* of his *Heirs*, which *he* himself shall be *damned* too for refusing to lay it out for God. Do not think these Expressions harsh and strain'd; No they are the naked Truth and will appear to any Man to be so that shall consider, how plainly our Blessed Saviour has pass't the terrible doom, of *Depart ye Cursed on them that have not fed the Hungry, nor cloath'd the Naked, &c.* 25 Mat. 41, &c.

And if those are like to give but a dreadful Account of their Riches that have thus *boarded 'em up*, sure they will give no better, that have *spent 'em upon their Lusts*, and thrown 'em away upon their Sensual Excesses. 'Twill be but a woful Reckoning to make when this is the short of it, so many *hundreds* spent in *Gluttony* and *Drunkennes*, so many in *Luxury* and *Pride*, and *superfluous Vanity*, so much in *Gaming*, so much upon *Harlots*,

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Harlots, and after all, nothing for the honour of God, or at best a few *Shillings* or *Pounds* lay'd out to relieve the Poor, and perhaps that rather out of *Ostentation* and *Pride* than *real Charity*. But O that such wou'd consider, this is no less than to turn those *Riches* God has given us into *Arms of Hostility* against himself, this is to *pervert* his *Gifts* to the *dishonour* of the *Giver* ; This is to feed and nourish his *Enemies* at the *Expence* of his *Bounty*. And such may be sure, That as their guilt is great, so will their *Condemnation* be aggravated. I know many will be ready to excuse their *scantiness* in doing Good, by the pretence of their *numerous Families*. And so far we must allow the *Plea*, that doubtless our *Obligations* to provide for 'em must be comply'd with ; And 'tis what can be spar'd from thence that we shou'd devote to God. But then on the other hand, I fear many *Parents* little consider, That the Great God will not take it well at their hands to prefer the *unnecessary Grandure* of their Families to his own *Glory* and *Interest* in the World. They may best expect a *Blessing* on their *Posterity* when they leave 'em a *competency* suitable to their *Rank*, and *Entail* up-
on

on 'em those Blessings God has promis'd to the *Race* of the *Merciful* and *Liberal*; Whereas they may reasonably fear, That if their ambition to raise them above their Rank, tempt 'em to *withhold from God and from his Poor* what he has made their due, it may be just with him to blast their proud Design, and to permit those *Excessive Portions* they leave 'em to become a pernicious Snare to their Souls, and Sacrifice to their Expensive Lusts. I think we may as truly lay of Riches *penuriously boarded up* as well as of Estates *unjustly gotten*, that they are seldom durable; But are generally as prodigally squandred away, as they were at first sordidly amass'd together.

2. Consider, *That you have the greatest Encouragement to this Duty of doing good, &c. from the prospect of an Unconceivably glorious Reward.*

Hereby you'll lay up for your selves in Store a good Foundation for the Time to come, and lay hold on Eternal Life.

And methinks this is an Argument which the Wisdom of God suits to the disposition of the Rich. They talk much of their Interest, and seem to express a great

great regard to it in all their Transactions. And accordingly to allure 'em to so excellent a Duty, the Blessed God recommends it from this very Consideration of *Interest*, assuring 'em they shall be no *Losers* at the foot of the Account for all they lay out for him, but infinite *Gainers* in the issue. They shall *treasure up a good Foundation for themselves against the time to come*. (For so our Translators and others render *θεμελιον* according to it's most obvious signification). And according to this sense of the Phrase, The Apostle seems to intimate, that as the *Foundation* is lay'd deep in the Earth, and usually *hidden from view*, from whence the *Building* and *Superstructure* rises very high and conspicuous, so from those Exercises of our *Divine Charity on Earth* (which are often *secret* and *conceal'd* from common view, as our Saviour intimates they shou'd ordinarily be, 6 Mat. 1, 2, 3. &c.) shall this glorious *Reward* of our future *Felicity* rise and *spring up*.

Others Expositors suppose that either *θεμελιον* is by the mistake of Expositors put for *κτινιον* or at least taken by the Apostle in that sense; and so the sense is plain, that by being *rich in good works*

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works we shou'd be solicitous to lay up *hidden Treasures* to be enjoy'd in a future Life when all our *Earthly Possessions* shall fail us. According to our Saviour's Advice, *12 Luke 33.*

Others tell us, that this Word was us'd by the *Jews* to signify *Tabule contracts*; *Bonds* and *Obligations*. And so they suppose that the Apostle here considers God as by his own gracious Promise made *Debtor* to us, for all that we faithfully lay out for him, (He having told us, That *he that gives to the Poor lendeth to the Lord, and he will repay it, XIX Prov. 17*). Accordingly the Apostle exhorts the *Rich* to manage a profitable commerce with Heaven by their wealth on Earth. To become God's *Creditors* and make him their *Debtor*, treasuring up by their liberality to his Interest and his poor Children, many *Bonds* and *Obligations* that shall in the Time to come (in the future State) be fully *discharg'd* to their unspeakable Advantage and Gain.

And truly my Brethren, When I consider all the precious Promises which God has made to such as are rich in good works, both relating to this Life (which I have not now time particularly to consider) and in reference to the future; which

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I am now speaking of, I must needs say, That here is a very proper and clear *Test* for the Tryal of your *Faith*. For if you *believe* these Promises, you must be unaccountably stupid, if they are not prevailing Incitements to this Duty. Where's thy Faith Man, if thou art afraid of being a *Loser* by thy Liberal Charity? Nay, where's thy Regard to thy own Interest, if so amazing a Recompence will not draw out thy Heart and Hand? Merchants scruple not to lay out *present Money* for future *profitable returns* upon good security. Wilt thou not part with thy *corruptible Treasures* for the certain prospect of *incorruptible ones*, with thy *perishing Possessions* for an *unsfading Inheritance*, with thy *decaying Baggs* for *such as never wax old*, with the Wealth which Death will soon *dispose* thee of, for that which will *enrich* thy Soul for ever? He that is not content to make this Bargain, either understands or considers not what *Heaven* and it's *endless Happiness* means, or he does not believe God's Promises concerning the Reward of this Duty.

Only mistake not, as if our *Alms* cou'd entitle us to Heaven by way of *merit*, when really in the most faithful distribution of 'em we have only given back to

God

A Charge to the Rich. 123

God part of his own according to his Express Orders. Nay, think not that your bare *External Liberality* will entitle you to this Reward, unless it flows from the predominant *Love of God* and sincere *Love of Men*, and is accompany'd with other *Principles* and *Exercises* of Sincere and Universal Holiness. 'Tis an awful Supposition the Apostle elsewhere makes of a *Man's giving all his Goods to feed the Poor* (i. e. out of *Ostentation* and *Vain-glory*) and yet *wanting inward Charity*, 1 Cor. 13. 3. But where our *Liberality* flows from *right Principles*, and is exercis'd with due *aims* and *ends*, we may comfortably expect, that it shall meet with so desirable a Recompence. Our Saviour himself has told us how high a value he puts on these *good works* when he assigns them as the *Reason* of that joyful *Doom* he passes on the *Righteous*, 25 Mat. 34. O let us then be *rich in good works* now, as we wou'd be *rich in Faith* and *Divine Hope*, and *rich in the Possession* and *Enjoyment* of *Heavenly Treasures* and *Joys* for ever!

F I N I S.

At a charge to the Right.

and part of his own according to his
former Orders. I think it is
your duty to follow him with all
you to the Reward unless it flow from
the great sinant I am God and who to
face of it, and if I accompany with
other friends and society of others
and Universal Honor. It is an awful
suggestion for the Apostle elsewhere makes
of a man saying of God to be
But (I. 2. out of Obedience and
glory) and yet we must be obedient
in 13. 3. But we are our Liberty
flows from right Liberty, and is ex-
cised with due mind and will, we may
commonly expect, that it shall be
will to deliver a Remembrance. Our
saviour himself has told us how high a
value he puts on the Liberty of the
he assigns them as the reason of that
all. Do not the gates on the Right
Man 3. 4. O let us then be free to
work, as we would be free to
and have the Rose and vine in the
and I am of Liberty. I am
and for ever!

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THE
Internal Evidence

And Proof of

Christianity,

FROM

I John V. Ch. 10 v.

By J. B.

DUBLIN:

Printed for the use of the Author,
1708.

I think one who has not the
extraordinary witness in himself
may pick this - in him self
and Samaritan's fragments

applied by me - say this in
conclusion in order to

and for some but add - if
any person

ask them

I carefull too to

disturb

J. B.

DUBLIN

Printed for the use of the Author

1793

A SERMON, &c.

From I John V Chap. 10 v.

The First Clause:

He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the Witness (or Testimony) in himself. He that believeth not God hath made him a Lyar, because he believes not the Record that God gave of his Son.

THE Apostle John in the foregoing Verses had been producing the Witnesses that do concur in attesting the grand Cause of Christianity.

What the Matter of their Testimony is, Or what is the great Truth they are suppos'd to bear witness to, you have in the verse following my Text, viz. *That God hath given to us Eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son.*

This Cause of Christianity the Apostle supposes to be confirm'd by three Witnesses in Heaven, and three on Earth. The Witnesses in Heaven, are the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. The Witnesses on Earth, The Spirit,

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Spirit, the Water, and the Blood. He mentions *Three Witnesses* both in *Heaven* and in *Earth*, perhaps in Allusion to that *Maxime* of the Law of *Moses*, *That in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses every word shou'd be establish'd*, 17 Deut. 6.

For the *Witnesses in Heaven*, viz. *The Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.*

They do attest *Jesus Christ* to be the *Son of God* in whom he has given us *Eternal Life*.

The *Father* did it by his frequent *Declarations* by an *audible Voice* from *Heaven*. Such a *Testimony* he bare to him at his *Baptism*, 3 *Matth.* 17. *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased.* The like *Testimony* he gave to him at his glorious *Transfiguration*, 17 *Matth.* 5. The like *Testimony* he gave to him at the near *Approach* of his *Sufferings*, See 12 *John* 28.

The *Eternal Word* attested the same *Truth from Heaven*.

And that not meerly in his *miraculous Operations* on *Earth* in which the *Rays* of his *Divine Perfections* shone out thro' the *Vail* and *Disguize* of our *Flesh* which he had assum'd; But chiefly in his *glorious Appearances from Heaven*. For he is here consider'd as one of the *Witnesses*

nesses residing there. And therefore I wou'd refer this *Testimony of the Eternal Word*, to such remarkable Events as these; To his *sensible Manifestation* of himself to his Dying Martyr Stephen, to whom he appear'd *sitting at the Right Hand of God* with all the resplendent Marks of truly Divine Majesty and Glory, with which that excellent Saint was so transported that he crys out in a rapture of Faith and devout Affection, *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit, 7 Acts 59.* In the like *sensible manner* he appeared to Saul when a furious Persecutor, surrounding him with a *glorious Light*, and expostulating with him in that tender Language, *Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou me?* See *9 Acts.* And so deep Impressions did this *Heavenly Vision* make upon him that it conquer'd his Unbelief, and brought him to that submissive frame as to cry out, *Lord, what woudst thou have me to do?* Nay, a *Second Vision* he had of our Blessed Saviour while he was praying in the Temple, ordering him to depart from *Jerusalem* and to go to the Gentiles, See *22 Acts 17, 18, &c.* And some do not improbably suppose, that during that Trance he was rapt up into the *third Heaven* and had the *Revelations* and

Visions which he mentions, 2 Cor. 12. 1.

And to add no more, he appear'd to this very *Apostle* when an *Exile* in the *Isle of Patmos*, where *John* receiv'd that *Revelation* immediately from him, which he deliver'd to the *Church*; And accordingly as himself there speaks, *bare record of the Word of God, and of the Testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw*, See 1 Rev. 1, 2, and throughout the Chapter.

Nay, *another Vision* of him he had mention'd, 5 Rev. 6. And a *Third Vision* at 14 Chap. 14. And a *Fourth* mention'd, 19 Rev. 11, 12. Where as he appear'd with the resplendent *Glory*, so he assum'd the *Name of The Word of God, The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*.

The *Holy Ghost* bare witness to the same *Truth*, by his miraculous *Descent* upon our *Blessed Saviour* himself at his *Baptism*, 3 Matth. 26. upon whom he is said to *Descend like a Dove* i. e. not in the *Form and Shape of a Dove*, (as has been too generally but I think erroneously supposed) For then it shou'd have been *was not*. But rather he descended with a *trembling* and

and hovering Motion as a Dove descends and lights upon a Place. 'Tis more probable that he appear'd in the Form of a bright *Light* or *Fire* (as he did on the Apostles) but only the Motion thereof was like that of a Dove. Upon which *Descent* our Lord *Jesus* is said to be full of the *Holy Ghost*, abundantly replenish'd with Divine Wisdom and Light for the Publishing his Heavenly Doctrine.

And the same Testimony the *Holy Spirit* bare to the Son of God in it's miraculous *Descent* upon the Apostles, when commission'd to go and Disciple all Nations to him, and that according to our Saviour's express Promise and Prediction to 'em.

And of this glorious Testimony given to Christ in the Extraordinary Gifts of his Holy Spirit, I have had some time ago occasion to treat so largely that I shall content my self with this brief mention of it here.

Besides these Three Witnesses in Heaven there were Three on Earth, viz. the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood.

The Spirit as distinguish'd from the Holy Spirit seems to refer to those manifold Miracles which our Blessed Saviour is said to perform or work by the Spirit, 12 Mat. 28. Whereas the Holy Spirit

seems to refer to those *Extraordinary Intellectual Gifts* which the same *Divine Agent* is the *Author* of. For tho' the *Power* of the *Divine Spirit* did conspicuously appear in the *Miracles* wrought by *Christ* during his *Personal Ministry*, and even the *Disciples* themselves were *impower'd* to work 'em, yet we read exprefly, That the *Holy Ghost* was not given, because *Jesus* was not yet glorified, 7 *John* 39. Which plainly refers to those *Extraordinary intellectual Gifts* which the *Apostles* receiv'd upon the miraculous *Descent* of the *Holy Spirit* upon 'em (mention'd, 2 *Acts* at the beginning).

By the *Water* here, We may understand that *Purity* and *Holiness*, which not only shone in our Saviour's *Doctrine* and *Life*, but was the genuine Effect of that *Doctrine* on the Souls of all that sincerely embrac'd it, and of which accordingly they made a solemn Profession by *Baptism* in their first Admission into the number of his *Disciples* and *Followers*. The *Jews* themselves did from *John's Baptizing*, and from *Christ's* doing so (i. e. by his *Disciples* who herein observ'd his Orders and Instructions) conclude, That the one or the other pretended to the *Autherity* of the *Messiah* in whose days they suppos'd,

and Proof of Christianity. 133

pos'd, That an *Universal Baptism* shou'd be administred, See 1 *John* 25. 3 *Luke* 15. compar'd with 13 *Zech.* 1. 36 *Ezek.* 25. And therefore that eminent *Purity* which our Saviour enjoyn'd by his *Doctrine*, and exemplify'd in his *Life*, and by *External Baptism* requir'd in all his *Disciples* a solemn *Profession* of, was one eminent *Witness* to the *Truth* of his *Pretensions* to be the *Son of God* and the *promised Messiah* and *Saviour of the World*, who came to *save his People from their Sins*, and to *bless 'em by turning 'em from their Iniquities*, 1 *Mat.* 21. III *Acts* 26.

The *Last Witness* mentioned is the *Blood*.

By this no doubt, We must understood his *Blood* as shed upon the *Cross* when he there Dy'd as our *Expiatory Sacrifice*.

Now *Christ* by his *Death* it self gave a *Solemn Attestation* to the *Truth* of that good *Confession* he had made before the *Jewish Sanedrim* of his being the *Christ*, the *Son of the Blessed*.

But Especially His *Shedding that Blood* to obtain the *Remission of Sins*; His professedly *Dying* under the *Notion* of an *Expiatory Sacrifice*; as the *Lamb of God* that shou'd bear and take away the *Sin of the World*,

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World, was so manifest an *Accomplishment* of all those famous *Prophecys* concerning the *Messiah* that foretold his *Sufferings* and the *procuring Cause* of 'em, (such as 53 *Is.* throughout, 9 *Dan.* 24, 26, not to mention all the *Typical Expiatory Sacrifices* under the Law of which he was the great *Antitype*). That his *Blood* may be justly reckon'd among those *Witnesses* which here on Earth attested his being the *Son of God*, and the *Author of Eternal Life and Salvation*.

And therefore from the clear *Evidence* which all these *Witnesses* give to this *Fundamental Article* of our Holy Religion, The Apostle justly concludes, That if we receive the *Witness* or *Testimony* of Men, we shou'd much more receive that *Divine Testimony* which is far greater, and consequently more worthy of Belief. For this (q. d. This *Evidence* I have mention'd) is the *Witness* (or *Testimony*) that God hath testify'd of of his Son. But besides all this *External Evidence* which is capable to convince *Infidels* themselves if they brought an unprejudic'd Mind to the search of Divine Truth, he appeals to a *New Internal Evidence* which every sincere *Christian* carries of this great Truth in his own Breast ;

Breast; He that believeth on the Son of God hath the Witness in himself. i. e. He can in and from himself, and from what he has experienc'd in his own Soul attest this great Truth, That God hath given to us Eternal Life; and this Life is in his Son.

And this is the remarkable Passage which I design, by Divine Assistance to treat upon, *viz.*

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the Witness (or Testimony) in himself.

In speaking hereto, I shall consider,

I. What *Witness* or *Testimony* this is which the Apostle here speaks of,

II. How every True Christian may be said to have *this Testimony in himself.*

I. Let us consider, What *Witness* or *Testimony* this is of which the inspir'd Apostle here speaks.

Answer, We must here carefully distinguish between the *Matter* of this *Testimony*, or the *Thing* that is attested, and the *Evidence* or *Proof* of it.

1. As to the *Matter* of the *Testimony* or the *Thing* attested, 'Tis mention'd in the *Verse* following my Text, *That God has given to us Eternal Life, and that this Life is in his Son, i. e. That God in his gracious Covenant has made unto us a*
free

free Grant and Gift of Eternal Life, and and that *this Life is in his Son* as the *Author* and *Spring* of it; Who *procur'd* it for us at the *Expence* of his *Blood*; who will by his *Royal Power* put us into the full *Possession* of it; and who by his *Sanctifying Grace* dos mould and frame us for it, and as it were *sow* the *Seeds* and *Principles* of it in our own Souls. Inasmuch as he *that bath the Son* (i. e. by a vital Union to him as one of the *Living Members* of his *Mystical Body*) *bath Life*, he has not only a *Right* and *Title* to this *Eternal Life*, but he *has it in primitiis*; he carries about the *Seed*, the *First fruits*, the *Foretast* and *Earnest* of it. So that we see, that the *Gift* and *Grant* is *Conditional*, not made indefinitely to all, but only to such *as believe on the Son of God*, and are by such a *Sincere* and *Practical Faith* brought into a *vital Union* to him. You see then *the Record* it self, *viz.* The *free* and *unmerited Promise* of *Eternal Life* to all true Believers, even of that *Eternal Life* which the *Son of God* is the *Author* of, *purchasing* it for us by the *Price* of his *Blood*, *preparing* us for it by the *Efficacy* of his *Grace*, and *Dispensing* it to us by the *Exercise* of his *Judicial Authority* and his *Royal Power*.

And

And this a compendious *Summary* of the *Gospel* it self. And this is the *Record* or *Testimony*, μαρτυρία mention'd at the 11 v.

But

2. There is here to be consider'd the *Evidence* and *Proof* of the *Matter* that is here attested, (i. e. of this great and important Truth of the Christian Religion which I have mention'd under the former Head).

And 'tis concerning this latter that the Apostle must be understood in my Text. You know in the *Testimony* of a *Witness* we do not barely consider what he asserts, but what *Evidence* and *Proof* he produces to confirm the Truth of the *Assertion*. As in matters of *Fact*, whether he himself was an *Eye* or *Ear witness* of what he affirms to be done or spoken, or what *Cause of knowledge* he has concerning it.

Now the Apostle does here suppose every true *Believer* to be himself a *Witness* in this grand Cause of Christianity, and to carry in himself a solid *Evidence* and *Proof* of this Important and Fundamental Truth thereof.

And therefore those plainly overlook the true Sense of the *Original*, who by the *Witness* here understand the *Spirit himself*. As if the Apostle had said, *He*

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that believes in the Son hath one of these Three Witnesses in himself, viz. The Spirit. 'Tis indeed true, that the Holy Spirit dwells in every true Christian, and that he who has not the Spirit of Christ is none of his, 8 Rom. 9, 'Tis also true, That the peculiar Effects of the Holy Spirit are the Evidence and Proof here design'd (as I shall more fully shew anon). But the words, are not *ἔχει τὴν μαρτυρίαν* but *τὴν μαρτυροῦται*. Not the *Witness*, but the *Testimony*, i. e. The Evidence and Proof of the grand Truth here attested, viz. *That God has given us Eternal Life, &c.* And this inward Evidence and Proof every true Christian has in himself, as a Confirmation of that External Evidence which the other Witnesses foremention'd give in.

And this leads me to the main Enquiry, viz.

II. How every true Christian has this Testimony (i. e. this Evidence and Proof) in himself? Or wherein that Internal Evidence and Proof lyes which every true Christian has in himself of this Fundamental Article of Christianity?

Answer. In general, This Internal Evidence is something distinct from, and super-added to, that External Evidence which is given in by these Witnesses mention'd before.

The

The Father's Testimony was given by an *audible Voice from Heaven*, The *Eternal Word's* by a *visible glorious Appearance*, The *Holy Spirit's* by those *Extraordinary Gifts* that were very observable in all that were endu'd with 'em. And the like might be said of the other *Three Witnesses on Earth*. But this *Evidence and Proof* depends on the *inward Sensation* of our own Souls; 'Tis founded on our *own Experience*, and those *Divine Effects* on our own Souls that are only immediately discernable by every true Believer himself.

Yet this *Internal Evidence and Proof* is very *consonant* and *agreable* to that *External Evidence* which the foremention'd *Witnesses* are laid to give. These Two *different Testimonies* do *entirely* and *sweetly accord*; They manifestly tend to *confirm* and *corroborate* each other.

But particularly, this *inward Evidence and Proof* which every true Christian has in himself, may be reduc'd to such Heads as these.

I. That *inward and universal Holiness* which his Soul is formed to, is a solid *Evidence and Proof* of this great Truth.

II. That *inward Peace and Consolation* that his Soul is replenish'd with, is a farther *Evidence and Proof* of it. And

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III. His *Conquest over the World* and vigorous joyful *Aspiration* to the endless Happiness of a better, is a farther *Evidence* and *Proof* of it.

Of these in their Order, And

I. That *inward* and *universal Holiness* which the Soul of every true Christian is formed to, is a solid *Evidence* and *Proof* of this great Truth.

I here take that for granted which the Experience of all Sincere Christians can attest, That there is a *Renewing* and *Sanctifying* Change in their Nature, by virtue whereof they are enabled concerning their former Conversation to put off the *Old Man with his corrupt Affections and Lusts*, and put on the *New which is created after the Image of God in Righteousness and true Holiness*. I here suppose it, That they are made *Partakers of a Divine and Godlike Nature*, and have escap'd the corruption that is in the *World thro' Lust*; That they are powerfully prompted and enabled to *cleanse themselves from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit*, and to *perfect Holiness in the fear of the Lord*. See IV Eph. 22. 23, &c. 1 Pet. II 4. 2 Cor. VII 1.

Now that this *Renovation* and *Sanctification* of their *Hearts* and *Lives* is a solid *Evidence* and *Proof* of this great Truth,

Truth, viz. *That Jesus is the Son of God and Author of Eternal Life*, will appear if we consider the following particulars.

1. They are conscious, *That this Renewing and Sanctifying Change is owing to the Doctrine of Christ as the External means of producing it.*

2. They have just reason to conclude, *that 'tis the Effect of a Supernatural Power, even the gracious Influences of the Spirit of Christ.*

3. From both these particulars, They justly conclude, *That he is the Son of God, and the Author of Eternal Life.*

1. They are conscious, *That this Renewing and Sanctifying Change is owing to the Doctrine of Christ as the External means of producing it.*

They know, that all that Heavenly Wisdom and Light that shines in their Understandings is deriv'd from that rich Treasury of Divine Wisdom and Knowledge, the Gospel of Christ. And all those Graces, those Godlike Qualities, those amiable Lineaments of the Divine Image, those bright Resemblances of that infinitely glorious Being in his imitable Perfections, are the genuine impression and Stamp of that Heavenly Doctrine which the Gospel contains. 'Tis that Grace of
God

God bringing Salvation that has taught 'em to deny all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, and to live Godly, and Soberly, and Righteously in this present World, as becomes those that wait for the Blessed Hope, &c. 2 Tit. 11, 12, &c. They find by happy Experience, that 'tis the marvellous Discovery of the Transcendent and Matchless Love of God display'd to us in our Lord Jesus Christ, (the most glorious Gift, the brightest Image and Mirror of Divine Love) that has inflam'd their Souls with such a Superlative Love to God, and brought 'em under the sweet and powerful constraints of it. And these ardours of Divine Love are the height, the comprehensive Summary of all true Piety; And yet scarce ever Nam'd or Rank'd among the Vertues of the Pagan Moralists. So peculiar an Effect is Divine Love of Revealed Religion! Nay, 'tis this Gospel of Christ that has taught 'em to direct all their Actions to the Glory of God as their Ultimate End; A Lesson which they wou'd never have learn'd in the Schools of the Heathen Moralists. They are conscious, That that profound Humility which is so amiable a Grace, but so wholly unknown to the Masters of the Heathen Morality, is the genuine Product

Product of this *Divine Revelation*. 'Tis the Gospel that by clearly discovering the Peerless Majesty, the unspotted Purity and Holiness, and other adorable Perfections of the Divine Nature, and by representing to us our meanness and villeness, our corruption and guilt, has taught us such becoming *self-abasement* before that infinitely great and holy Being. Nay, 'tis the Gospel that by discovering our lapsed and miserable State, and our entire Obligation to Divine Mercy and Grace for every Step of our Recovery from it, has taught us to ascribe all the *Glory* of our *Salvation* to God as the great *Author* of it. It has entirely silenc'd among true Christians any such proud Language as that which was so common among the best of Heathen Moralists, *That we may owe our Riches to the Deity, but we have our Wisdom and Vertue from our selves.*

A true Christian is conscious to himself, that 'tis the believing Contemplation of the infinite Love of God extended to *himself* when a perverse Enemy and Rebel against him, that has engag'd him not only to Love all those that bear his amiable Image, but to love his *Enemies* themselves. 'Tis this Gospel

pel has taught him those Difficult but Noble and admirable Heights of God-like Love, To forgive the greatest of Injuries and to overcome the Evil of others with his Good.

Nay, he is conscious, that the peculiar *Motives* which Christianity presents have the most powerful influence upon his Soul to excite him to this Universal Holiness of Heart and Life. He finds by happy Experience, that there is an admirable Vertue in his believing Meditations on the *Cross of Christ* to prompt him in conformity to the great End of his Death, To Crucify this Flesh with the Affections and Lusts thereof, Nay, to Crucify the World to him, and him to the World. He can from Christ's Dying for him, draw the strongest Arguments to live not to himself but to him that dyed for him, and rose again. He can from the Mercies of God in appointing his Son to be a Suffering and Propitiation draw the most powerful Persuasives to present his Body and Soul as a Living holy Sacrifice to God, as conscious 'tis but a most reasonable Service, XII Rom. 1. He feels the Efficacy of Divine Love to constrain him to all ingenuous and chearful Obedience, and finds by happy Experience, that to a
Soul

Soul animated by that filial affection to God, *His Commandments are not grievous, his Yoke is easy and his Burden light.*

In a word, He is conscious to himself, That all the eminent *Attainments* in practical *Religion* and *Holiness* that he has ever reach'd to, are owing to the *Precepts* of the Gospel as the great *Directory* of his *Heart* and *Life*; And that he derives the most *persuasive Motives* there-to from the *peculiar Doctrines* contain'd in that Divine Revelation. And how solid an *Evidence* and *Proof* this is of the great Truth here suppos'd to be attested, I shall have occasion anon to shew.

I now add,

2. Every true Christian has just reason to conclude, *That this Renewing Sanctifying Change in his Soul is the Effect of a Supernatural Power, even of the vital Influences of the Spirit of Christ.*

We are conscious of our own woful *Degeneracy* and *Corruption*, of our Natural *Enmity* and *Disaffection* to the Holy Nature and Laws of God. We can our selves remember the Time when in our unregenerate State these Divine Truths have been *externally propos'd* to us, and have made no such *transforming Impressions* on our *Hearts* and *Lives*. We do

see many Thousands that attend on the Dispensation of the Gospel without having any such Divine Effects produc'd on their own Souls. We see in many this renewing Change *so suddenly effected* as shews the Power by which it is produc'd to be *Supernatural* and *Divine*. For what less Power can so immediately quicken a *Dead Soul* to *Spiritual* and *Divine Life*, transform a *Bruit* or *Incaruate Fiend* into an *Incaruate Angel*? What less than Divine Energy can so suddenly conquer all the obstinate opposition of depraved Nature and of the most inveterate sinful Habits, and turn a *disobedient Sinner* to the *Wisdom of the Just*, can pull down the *Strong-holds* of Sin, and *captivate every high Thought* to the obedience of *Faith*? What less than a *Supernatural Vertue* can as it were in a moment make all the *Fruits of Paradise* appear in a *barren Soyl* where nothing but *Irreligion* and *Prophaneness*, and the like pernicious *Weeds* sprung up before? These are plain *Evidences* that there is a *quickning Energy* and *Vertue* that accompanies the Dispensation of the Gospel to *such Souls* on whom so glorious Effects are so *suddenly* produc'd. Nay, where the *Change* seems to be more *gradual*; Yet we all find,

find, That in our progressive Sanctification we do depend on such *vital Influences* from above for our *proficiency* in Divine *Light* and *Life*. We find by Experience the same Divine Truths are at some times represented to our Minds with clearer *Light* and *Evidence* than at others, and do at some times more deeply *affect* and *warm* our Hearts, and make *stronger Impressions* than at others. All this is so consonant to what the Gospel declares to us concerning the *Necessity* of the *Inward Operations* of the *Holy Spirit* to *renew* our Natures, and to carry on the great Work of our *Sanctification*, and concerning the *Arbitrary Freedom* of that *Divine Agent* in his *gracious Operations* (whom our Saviour so justly compares to the *Wind that blows where it lists*, &c. 3 *John*) as may greatly confirm us in the Persuasion, That this *glorious Change* produc'd in us is the *Effect* of the *Supernatural* and *Efficacious Grace* of the *Holy Spirit*.

Now if we compare both these Heads together, We may

3dly. From hence justly conclude, *That Jesus Christ is the Son of God in whom he has given us Eternal Life.*

We may hence justly conclude, That *Jesus Christ is the Son of God*. For since he claim'd that glorious *Character*, and under that *Character* requires our Belief of his Heavenly *Doctrine*, Had his Pretensions been false, can we ever imagine, that the Blessed God wou'd ever have so remarkably countenanc'd and own'd so vile an *Impostor*, as to make his *Doctrine* the successful *Means*, not only of so glorious a *Change* in the World as the recovering so many *Gentile Nations* from their *Polytheism* and *Idolatry* to the pure *Worship* of the one true God; but also the Blessed *Instrument* of *Regenerating* so many *Millions* of Souls, and *reinstamping* his own amiable *Image* upon 'em. Wou'd the God of perfect *Truth* and *Holiness* have ever blest'd a meer *Delusion* and *Lye* to produce the most *Glorious* and *God-like Effects* that ever were in the World? Must not that *Doctrine* be from *Heaven* that so apparently tends to advance the *Glory* of God, to restore his just *Kingdom* and *Empire* in the Souls of Men, to recover 'em to so admirable a *Conformity* to his own *Nature* and *Will*, to raise 'em to that *Holiness* that was once the *Beauty* and *Ornament* of their *Nature*? Must not that *Doctrine* be from

God which he accompanies with his *Supernatural Energy and Power* in producing these *Blessed Effects*? Would he so far own a vile *Deceiver* that falsely pretends to be his only begotten Son, as to entrust him with the *Communication* of this *Spirit of Divine Light and Life* to all his *Members and Followers*? No, We have all possible *Reason* to believe, That he is the *Son of God*, the *Essential Wisdom and Word* who came from the *Bosom of the Father* to reveal his Will, when we find in our own Souls such *Divine Fruits* of his *Heavenly Doctrine* and of that *Sanctifying Grace* that gives it such a *Transforming Power* upon 'em.

Nay, we may hence justly conclude, That God has given us *Eternal Life* in him. Because this *Universal Holiness* of Heart and Life is the very *Seed and Principle* of it. 'Tis this *Purity of Heart* that disposes us for the *Beatifick Vision* of God. 'Tis this *Blessed Conformity* of our Nature and Wills to his, that prepares us for the *fulness of Joy* that is in his (immediate) *Presence*, and the *Rivers of Pleasure* that flow at his *Right Hand* for evermore. 'Tis this suits us for the *Society* and *Converses* of Angels and the perfected Spirits of the Just, and cennaturalizes our Souls to

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to their *Employments* and *Exercises*, their *Entertainments* and *Joys*. 'Tis this fits us to become the Blessed *Inhabitants* of the *Regions* above, where perfect *Light* and *Love* and spotless *Purity* for ever reign.

And can we think that the Blessed God will ever frustrate our hopes of *Eternal Life*, when he has not only sent so Glorious a Messenger as his Incarnate Son to *reveal it*, but has been at such pains by the continued *Operations* of his Spirit and Grace to *render us meet for it*? Has he laid the *Foundation*, and rais'd the *Superstructure*, and will he not lay the *Top-stone*? Has he given us the *First Fruits*, and will he not give us the full *Harvest*? Has he fram'd us for, and will he not bring us to, that State of glorious *Immortality*? Sure if God in his inferior *Works of Nature* do nothing in vain, much less will he in this illustrious *Work of his Supernatural Grace*.

But

II. *That Inward Peace and Consolation that the Soul of every true Christian is replenish'd with, is a farther Evidence and Proof of this great Truth.*

And this will appear if we consider,

I. *That this inward Peace and Consolation is an Effect that no other Principles cou'd*

can't produce but those contain'd in the Gospel.

2. That this inward Peace and Consolation is no Fancy and Delusion, but a well grounded Persuasion.

3. From both these we may draw the Conclusion that is here to be attested.

I shall speak to these Heads in their order, And

1. This inward Peace and Consolation is an Effect that no other Principles can produce but those which the Gospel of Christ contains.

By this Inward Peace, I mean that Peace of Conscience that arises from the clear Persuasion of our Peace with God. That inward Calm and Serenity of Soul, That holy Confidence towards God which arises from the comfortable Persuasion, That he is our reconciled Father, That all our Iniquities are Forgiven, all our Guilt cancell'd, That our Persons are justify'd and accepted, And in a Word, that we are the Objects of his peculiar Favour and Love.

Now this is a Blessed Effect that no other Principles but those of the Gospel can produce.

Tho' the Light of Nature might be suppos'd

suppos'd to dictate something concerning the *placability* of the Divine Nature from the Exercise of his Goodness and Patience, yet it cou'd give us no satisfying Assurance of his *pardoning Mercy*. Much less cou'd it declare to us the *freeness* and *fulness* and *extent* of his *pardoning Mercy*, or upon *what Terms* he would *dispense* it. All these depending on the *free-pleasure* and *good-will* of God cou'd only be *discover'd* by *Divine Revelation*. And least of all cou'd the *Light of Nature* point out to us any *Expedient* or *Means* how the Exercise of God's *pardoning Mercy* might be *reconcil'd* with the *Honour* of his *Government* and the *Glory* of his *Vindictive Justice*.

The *Heathens* themselves had some Notices of the *Vindictive Justice* of God, and of the *Demerit of Sin* that expos'd us to it. And this led 'em to endeavour the *appeasing his Vengeance* by such a multitude of *Expiatory Sacrifices*, and so manifold *Rites of Purgation*. But Reason it self did suggest to the Wise and Considerate part of 'em, that there was no sufficient *Vertue* in those *Sacrifices* to *expiate* the real *Guilt of Sin*, that the *Life of a Sacrificed Brute* was no *Equivalent*, no *valuable Consideration* to *offset*

fended Justice for the forfeited Life of a guilty Offender. That their *External Purifications* cou'd not take away the deep *Stains* of hainous Guilt. And since they had no *Promise of Pardon*, No Notice of the *Extent of Pardoning Mercy*, No Intimation of the *Terms* of it, No Discovery of the *Way of obtaining it*, They cou'd have no *solid Ground* for any *firm and confident Persuasion* of it. And how *uncomfortable* must the Case of a Guilty Sinner be, when on the *one hand* he is under deep Convictions of hainous Guilt, and under fearful apprehensions of *Avengeing Justice*; And yet on the *other* under such a woful *Uncertainty* about the *Possibility* or the *Means* of obtaining *Divine Forgiveness*.

But here the *Gospel of Christ* alone gives every Penitent Sinner effectual *Relief* against his *guilty Fears*. He here sees the clearest and fullest *Promises* of entire *Forgiveness* and *gracious Acceptance* upon his penitent Return to an offended Father thro' the *Mediation* of his *Incar-nate Son*; Here he beholds the marvelous *Contrivance* of *Divine Wisdom* and *Grace* for according the seemingly divided *Interests* of his *Justice* and *Mercy*. Here he discerns a *Sacrifice* of *Infinite Value* ca-
X pable

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pable to *expiate* the Guilt of Sin, which the Blood of Bulls and Goats cou'd never do. Here he beholds such a *Declaration of the Righteousness of God* made, as may make it appear, That he is just when he is the gracious Justifier of those that believe in his Son. Here he sees a perfect Obedience capable to repair the Honour of God's injur'd Law, To procure the Gift of *Eternal Life*, and to recommend our Sincere tho' Imperfect Services to the Divine Acceptance and Reward. In a Word here his Conscience sees a solid Ground to rest upon in it's comfortable Apprehensions of free Pardon and Justification by an offended but reconcileable God, even a sure Promise of it founded upon a most valuable Consideration, that renders it every way consistent with the Honour of God's violated Law, the Rights of his injur'd Government, and the Glory of his incensed Justice. And no other Principles than these can give an alarmed Conscience any such solid Support, or effectually allay all the Storms of it's guilty Fears.

And I add,

2. That this inward Peace and Consolation of a true Christian is no delusive Fancy but a solid and well-grounded Persuasion.

And

And I think, The Truth of this will sufficiently appear, if we consider such things as these.

He does actually find, That this Blessed Peace does scatter all his guilty Fears, does calm and quiet his once perplexed Thoughts, is the Spring of sweet Consolation and Joy in his Soul, and does yield far more of refreshing Delight to it, than all the Increase of Corn and Wine, all affluence of Earthly Injoyments cou'd do.

Again, He is conscious, That this Persuasion of his Pardon and Peace with God does not spring from any injurious apprehensions of his adorable Perfections. He entertains no Notions of his boundless Mercy but what are every way consistent with the highest conceptions of his Spotless Purity, his Inflexible Justice, his Zeal for maintaining his Sovereign Authority and keeping up the due Reverence of his Laws.

Accordingly he finds, That this Persuasion of pardoning Mercy gives him no Encouragement to offend; He abhors the Thought of continuing in Sin that Grace may abound. On the contrary, The more freely he is forgiven, he is the more fearful to offend. The costly Method of his Redemption engages him

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to pass the time of his Sojourning here in fear,
 1 Pet. I. 18, 19. Nay, the Sense of
 pardoning Mercy melts his Soul into a
 more ingenuous relenting frame; It
 convinces him of his *Obligation* to devote
 that *Life* to the *Glory* and *Service* of
 God which his *Grace* releases from the
 Bonds of *Eternal Death*, and powerfully
 prompts him to it. It makes him the
 more resolv'd *not to return to Folly* when
 God has thus *spoken Peace to him*. And
 when he feels by Blessed Experience,
 That his Persuasion of pardoning Mercy
 makes such *ingenuous Impressions* upon
 his Soul as *these*, he cannot doubt but
 'tis *real* and *well grounded*, and not the
 Effect of any *Self flattering Delusion*. He
 cannot but regard this *Diffusion of the*
Love of God in his Soul (in the delightful
 Sense and Relish of it) as the genuine
 Effect of that truly Divine Comforter
 the *Holy Spirit*. Now

3. From both these he justly concludes,
That God has given us Eternal Life in his
Son.

For he may well argue, That God
 wou'd never so far countenance the *Pro-*
misses that were falsely made in his Name
 by a vile *Impostor*, as by these to produce
 so Excellent and Blessed an Effect in his
 own

own Soul, as this *Peace that passes all Understanding*. And since he is sure, That this *inward Peace* is a truly Divine Effect, and the Result of a well grounded Persuasion, He may well infer, That He must be the *Son of God* that can thus advance us to the *Relation of Children*, that can enable us to Cry *Abba Father*, and can shed abroad the *Love of God in our Hearts*. He must be the *Author of Eternal Life*, who can recover us that had forfeited all *Right and Title* to it, to so well-grounded an *Expectation* of it. He must be the *Effectual Propitiation for Sin*, and the true *Mediator and Peace maker* who can give to our trembling and distressed Souls that solid and refreshing *Peace* that so evidently appears to be the genuine Effect of our *Peace with God*. For if these *Grounds of Peace* which the Gospel suggests be not *solid and true*, we may well despair of finding *any other*.

See the Second Sermon.

F I N I S.

T H E
Internal Evidence
And Proof of
Christianity.

F R O M
I John V. Ch. 10 v.



Sermon Second.

By J. B.

D U B L I N :

Printed for the use of the Author,
1708.

A SERMON, &c.

From I John V. Chap. 10 v.

The First Clause.

He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the Witness (or Testimony) in himself. He that believeth not God hath made him a Lyar, because he believes not the Record that God gave of his Son.

I Have already enter'd on the Consideration of this remarkable Assertion of the Apostle's.

He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the Testimony in himself. [ἐχὼν τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐν ἑαυτῷ]. 3 NO 33

In speaking hereto,

I shew'd *What this Witness or Testimony is which every true Christian is said to have in himself.*

Here I distinguish'd between the *Matter* of this Testimony (or the thing attested) and the *Evidence and Proof* of it.

The

The *Matter* of the Testimony or the Thing attested, is, *That God has given to us Eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son.* i. e. That God has in his gracious Covenant made us a free Grant and Gift of *Eternal Life*; And that this *Eternal Life* is in his Son, as the *Author* and *Spring* of it, Who procur'd it for us at the Expence of his Blood, who by his Sanctifying Spirit does mould and frame us for it, and who by his Royal Judicial Power will put us into the full and final Possession of it.

So that the *Thing attested* is a compendious *Summary* of the Gospel it self.

But besides the *Matter* of the Testimony, or the *Thing attested*, there is the *Evidence* and *Proof* of it. And 'tis of this the Apostle speaks when he saith, *That he that believes has the Testimony in himself.* q. d. Every true Christian is a *Living Witness* to this great Truth of the Christian Religion, and carries in his own Soul a solid *Evidence* and *Proof* thereof. Then

II. I came to the main Enquiry, *How every true Christian has such a Testimony in himself?* Or what that *Internal Evidence* and *Proof* is, which every true Christian has in himself of this fundamental Article of Christianity. Now

and Proof of Christianity. 161

Now this *Internal Evidence and Proof* may be reduc'd to such Heads as these.

I. *That Inward and Universal Holiness, which his Soul is formed to, is a solid Evidence and Proof of this great Truth.*

II. *That Inward Peace and Consolation which the Soul of every true Christian is replenish'd with, is a farther Evidence and Proof of this great Truth.*

These Two Heads I have already consider'd, And I now add,

III. *A true Christian's Eminent Conquest over this World, and his ardent joyful Aspiration to the endless Happiness of a better, is another solid Evidence and Proof of this great Truth.*

I might indeed have mention'd this as one *Branch* of that *Universal Holiness* which I before spake of. But I chose rather for the great *Importance* of it to make it a *distinct Head*, because it affords us a *distinct and peculiar Proof* of this excellent *Summary* of the Gospel.

In speaking hereto, I shall shew,
First, *That this is an Effect which the Gospel produces in all true Christians.*

Secondly, *That 'tis the peculiar Effect of the Gospel-Revelation which no other Principles cou'd produce.*

Thirdly, I shall shew, How justly this

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Conclusion may be drawn from it, *That Jesus is the Son of God, and that God has given us Eternal Life in and by him.*

First, *This is an Effect which the Gospel produces in all true Christians, viz. An Eminent Conquest over this World, and ardent joyful Aspiration to the Happiness of a better.*

1. *The Gospel produces in all true Christians an Eminent Conquest over this World.*

So much the Apostle intimates at the 5th Verse of this Chapter, *Who is he that overcomes the World, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? And at Verse 4. This is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith.*

'Tis this *Divine Faith* that enables a Christian to conquer the tempting Allurements of this World.

The Idolized Vanities thereof carry Charms that are irresistible to carnal and sensual Minds. But Divine Faith counterworks those sensual Charms, and takes from the tempting Objects of this World all the force they wou'd otherwise have to ensnare and captivate our Hearts. 'Tis Divine Faith that draws from the Cross of Christ such an admirable Vertue to crucify a Believer to the World and the World to him, 6 Gal. 15. 'Tis Divine Faith

and Proof of Christianity. 163

Faith that teaches him to live as a *Pilgrim* and *Stranger* on *this Earth*, *abstaining* from *Fleshy Lusts*, and carrying about *dying Affections* to all the *dying Injoyments* and *Interests* of this poor *Animal Life*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 11. 'Tis this *Faith* that renders him more sollicitous and diligent to *lay up incorruptible Treasures* in *Heaven* than *corruptible ones* on *Earth*; Nay, makes him willing to *Sell all* for that *inestimable Pearl of Price*. 'Tis this *Faith* that enables him to regard all the admired *Honours* of the *World* as a piece of *gilded Pageantry*, as a *vain* and *transitory Show*, and even to trample on 'em with disdain so far as they stand in competition with that true *Honour* and *Glory* that is to be enjoy'd in a *Blessed Immortality*. 'Tis this *Faith* that prompts him to reject with contempt those *Momentary Pleasures* of *Sin* that wou'd tempt him to foregoe the hopes of *endless future Joys*. In a Word this *Divine Faith* enables him to turn a deaf Ear to all the *Blandishments* and *Flatteries* of the *Smiling World*, when it displays all it's *Beauties* in order to the *inveigling* and *debaasing* his *Affections*, and seducing his *Heart* from *God* and *Heaven*.

And the same *Principle* enables every true *Christian* to *triumph* over the *Terrors* of the *World*.

And of this *Victory* over it those *Martyrs* both of former and latter Ages have given a noble *Proof*, who have with so undaunted a fortitude look'd *Dangers* and *Death* it self in the face ; Who for the sake of *Christ* have not lov'd their *Lives* unto the *Death* ; Who have with so unfainting a *Courage* resisted unto *Blood* ; Who in conformity to their glorious *Head* and *Exemplar*, for the *Joy* set before 'em, have endured the *Cross*, despising the *Shame*, XII *Heb.* 2, 3.

And such a firm and unshaken *Constancy* (not only on the *Prospect*, but in the *midst* of the cruellest *Sufferings* themselves), has been shown by Persons, whose *Sex* and *Age* rendred 'em *Naturally* most *timorous*, and least capable to bear up against the *Terrors* of such *Barbarous* and *Bloody Persecution*. Yet even such have when *tortur'd*, not accepted *Deliverance* (on so base Terms as that of renouncing the *Truth*) that they might obtain a better *Resurrection*, 11 *Heb.* 35. And every true *Christian* is such a *Martyr* in *Resolution*. He enters on his *Discipleship* with a *Sincere* purpose to deny himself and take up his *Cross* and to follow his *Blessed Saviour*, tho' thro' the *Cross* to the *Crown* and thro' *Sufferings* unto *Glory*. He

He embraces the *Faith* of *Christ* in his *Heart* on the condition, not only of *Confessing* it with his *Mouth*, but if call'd to it of *Sealing* it with his *Blood*. And sure such an *Eminent Conquest* over both the *flattering* and *frowning* *World* as this is a *difficult* and yet *noble Attainment*. And yet every *true Christian* is such a *prevalent Conqueror* over it.

2. The *Gospel* dos also produce in every *true Christian* a *vigorous* and *joyful Aspiration* to the *endless Happiness* of a *better World*.

He sees nothing here below *Sutable* to the *Nature* and highest *Capacitys*, and *Adequate* to the *perpetual Duration* of his own *Soul*. All things under the *Sun* appear to him but *Vanity of Vanities*, *empty* and *unsatisfying*, as well as *transitory* and *perishing*. He therefore seeks for an *Happiness* beyond the bounds of *Sense* and the reach of *Time*. And having such a *satisfying* and *durable Blessedness* propos'd to him in the *great and precious Promises* of the *Gospel* he gladly embraces it, and becomes a *Zealous Candidate* and *Joyful Expectant* of *Eternal Life*. This glorious *Prize* he makes the *Object* of his warmest *Ambition* and most *delightful Hopes*. And hence his *Heart* and his *Conversation* are in *Heaven*, for there his most *valuable Treasure*

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Treasure is laid up. Thither he daily tends in his *believing forethoughts*, and *fervent desires*, and *Heart-Ravishing Expectations*. Nay so fervent are his *desires*, that he here even *grows* under the Imperfections of his Sinful and distant State, and is brought to that happy frame (even notwithstanding his natural Aversion to Death) as to be *confident and willing to be absent from the Body and present with the Lord*, Nay to be *desirous to depart and be with Christ* 2 Cor. V. 6. 7. 8. I Phil. 23. So far do the warm breathings of his Soul after the Glories of a blessed Immortality overcome all *Inordinate Love of Natural Life*. And such Transporting *Delight* dos the prospect of that future Blessedness sometimes fill him with, that he even here feels some *sweet foretast* of it, and Rejoyces in the hope of it with a *joy unspeakable and full of Glory*, See 1 Pet. I. 8.

Such a *mortified*, such a *Divine* and *Heavenly* frame dos the Gospel mould the Heart of every Sincere Christian into.

And

Secondly, *Such an Eminent Conquest over this World*, such a *vigorous and joyful Aspiration to the Happiness of a better*, is a *peculiar*

peculiar Effect of the Gospel-Revelation, which no other Principles cou'd produce.

The *Happiness* of another State being a *Reward* that God is under no *Obligation* to bestow, and which we can no way *claim* from his *Justice*. The *Light of Nature* can only give us some *probable hope* concerning it, but can discover very little either of the *Nature* or *Duration* thereof. And accordingly, We see that the *Wiseſt* of the *Heathen Moraliſts* were involv'd in miserable *Uncertainties* about it. Even thoſe that go high-eſt in arguing for the *Immortality of the Soul* of Man (which is neceſſarily preſuppos'd to a *State of future Rewards*) do yet frequently profeſs they founded their *Opinion* concerning it only on ſome *probable Conjectures* rather than on any *certain and ſatisfying Evidence*. 'Tis in ſuch doubtful and diffident Language as this that ſuch Men as *Socrates* and *Cicero* ſpeak, who ſeem to have been the moſt *Zealous Aſſerters* of the *Immortality of the Soul*. And for the *Nature*, of that future *Happineſs*, Their *apprehenſions* concerning it were either very *groſs and ſenſual* (like thoſe which *Mahomet's* Followers entertain concerning their *Paradiſe*) or *abſurd and fooliſh*, (placing it in the *Transmigration*

Transmigration of Human Souls into the Bodies of some innocent Beasts or Birds) or at best merely conjectural and doubtful. And the generality of those that suppos'd *Human Souls* to survive their *Bodies* seem'd to assign 'em only a long not a perpetual and endless Duration. Nay, these dark *Apprehensions* themselves concerning a future State of Happiness, seem to have been rather the curious *Speculations* of their *Philosophers* than the general *Opinion* of the *People* in the *Heathen World*, being never (as one has well observ'd) establish'd as any part of their *Religion*, nor the *Belief* of 'em ever requir'd by any *Law* among 'em. And how little cou'd it be expected that the *Body* of the *Gentile-World* shou'd be powerfully influenc'd by such dark and conjectural *Opinions* concerning a State of future Happiness as few of 'em gave any great credit to, and the *Wise*st among 'em look'd on as dubious and uncertain? How justly may it be ascrib'd to *Divine Revelation* in general, and particularly to the *Gospel of Christ*, as the peculiar *Glory* thereof, That thereby *Life and Immortality* are brought into (clear and perspicuous) *Light*. 2 *Tim.* I. 10. 'Tis that alone has given us such satisfying Assurance of such

a glorious *Immortality* as our whole *Nature*, our *Bodies* as well as *Souls*, shall partake of. *The Resurrection of the Body* being wholly unknown to the *Pagan World*. 'Tis that alone has taught us to place that *future Happiness* in the *immediate Vision of God*, and *perfect Conformity to him*, and *full Enjoyment of him*. 'Tis that alone has reveal'd to us the *endless Duration* of it. 'Tis that alone has clearly discover'd on *what Terms* that *Transcendant and Glorious Reward* will be bestow'd, and fortify'd us against those *discouraging fears* that the *Sense of our own Unworthiness and Guilt* do *Naturally suggest* to our *Minds* to the *weakning of our Divine Hopes*. In a Word, were this *Divine Revelation* lay'd aside, we shou'd have no *clear and solid Foundation* for our *Heavenly Hope*; We shou'd be left to all the *woful Uncertainties* and *disconsolate Darkness* in which the *generality of the Pagan World* were involv'd. So justly may every true *Christian* say to our *Blessed Lord* in the *Language of the Apostle Peter*, *To whom shall we go, for thou hast the Words of Eternal Life?* 6 *John* 68.

And that leads me
Thirdly, To shew, How justly we may
Z
hence

hence infer, *That God has given us Eternal Life, and that this Life is in his Son.*

Now we may very well reason thus.

What *Promise* can be more worthy of an Infinitely Gracious God to make, and of the Soul of Man to embrace, than that of *Eternal Life*? Since the Light of Nature gives us some *obscure Glimpses* and raises us to some (tho' *uncertain*) *Hopes* of a *Blessed Immortality*, what cou'd be more agreeable to the Goodness of God than by Supernatural Revelation to give us a *clear and satisfying* Discovery of it?

And where shall we meet with any such clear and satisfying Discovery but in the Gospel of *Christ*, who thus profess'd himself to be *the Son of God*? And can we ever think that the infinitely Wise and Holy God wou'd ever make use of a *false Pretender* and *vile Impostor* to give us so bright a Revelation concerning a *future and endless State of Glory*, and so affecting a Representation of it, as shall beget many Millions of Souls to *the Living Hope* of that *incorruptible Heavenly Inheritance*? Nay, wou'd he ever so far countenance such an *Impostor*, as to give such Assurance to the World of the Truth of his Doctrine concerning the *Resurrection* and the *future Judgment* by
raising

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raising him from the Dead, and giving thereby to all his Followers such a Specimen, such an Evidence and Earnest of that Immortality he had promis'd 'em ? 17 *Acts 31.* Have we not on the contrary all possible Reason to believe him to be what he profess'd himself, Even *the Son of God*, who has brought us so clear a Discovery, and so glorious a Grant and Promise of *Eternal Life* (and that as the purchase of his own *Blood*), and who has by his own *Resurrection* and *Ascension* (as well as by his miraculous Power in *Raising others*) given us such a Pledge and Security of our's? What greater Errand cou'd *the Son of God* come down from Heaven upon, then to unveil the *Glories* of that *invisible State*, and to guide our Heaven-Born Souls *in the way to it*? And what clearer Evidence cou'd be given of his *Divine Mission* on this Excellent Errand, than that of his own *Resurrection* and *Ascension*?

And can we ever think such a *Revelation* as this to be no better than a gross *Imposture* and *Delusion*, when this Noble *Effect* of it is so *Heavenly* and *Divine*? Were there no such thing as *Eternal Life*, wou'd the Infinitely Wise and Good God suffer the best of Men to be

thus deluded with the mistaken Hopes of it ! For if those *Hopes* prove only a wretched *Delusion*, They are (as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. XV. 19.) of *all Men the most miserable*. And yet doubtless, those that entertain these Heavenly Hopes, and are from thence induc'd to trample on this World, and to repel the numerous Temptations of it, and to aspire with so ardent desires to a State of Immortal Blessedness above, are the *Wiseſt* and *Beſt* of Men.

'Tis these *Candidates* and *Expectants* of Eternal Life are the Men that entertain the most Honourable Thoughts of God, and aim at the nearest Conformity to him, and are most entirely devoted to his Service, and possess'd with the most Ardent and Superlative Love of him. And can we think that he will abandon them of all others to the most *pernicious Delusions* ? Nay, use his own *Almighty Power* to countenance and credit the *Grand Deceiver* ? Sure we can never think so injuriously of him, concerning whom next to his *Being* or *Existence*, we ought to believe, That *he is the (liberal) Rewarder of all that diligently seek him*, 11 Heb. 6.

Nor can we easily think that Promise
of

of *Eternal Life* to be a *Delusion*, which so evidently tends to *elevate* and *raise*, to *enoble* and *perfect* the Soul of Man, and to cast it into such a *God-like* and *Heavenly* Mould. The Holy God needs not make use of a *Lye* and *Deceit* to produce so *Excellent* and *Noble* an *Effect*. That *Doctrine* must needs be from God that so powerfully leads the Soul of Man to choose and fix on him, as it's *Satisfying Portion*, and the Centre of it's *everlasting Rest*.

Having thus shewn, what *Internal Evidence* and *Proof* every true *Christian* has in himself of this great *Truth*, viz. That God has given us *Eternal Life*, and this Life is in his Son, I now proceed,

III^{dly}. To *Apply* it. Has every true Believer the *Witness* or *Testimony* in himself? Then

I. We may hence infer, *What a solid Confirmation* this *Internal Evidence* in *Conjunction* with that *External Evidence* we have for the *Truth* of the *Gospel*, gives to our *Christian Faith*.

The *Testimony* of those *Witnesses* mention'd in the foregoing part of the *Chapter* is *clear* and *full*.

So was the *Testimony* of the *Father* by frequently repeated *audible Voices* from
Heaven,

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Heaven, III *Mat.* 17. — XVII *Mat.* 5.
XII *John* 28.

So was the *Testimony* of the *Word*, by
so frequent and glorious *sensible Manifestations* of himself after his *Ascension* to
Heaven, — V *Acts* 59. — IX *Acts*.
XXII *Acts* 17, 18. — 2 *Cor.* XII 1. —
I *Rev.* 1, 2. — V. *Rev.* 6. — XIX
Rev. 11, 12.

So was the *Testimony* of the *Holy Spirit* in his miraculous *Descent*, first upon
Christ himself, and then on his *Holy Apostles*, and in all the *Extraordinary Gifts*
conferr'd upon 'em.

Nor was the *Testimony* of the *Three Witnesses* on *Earth* less full and clear.

The *Spirit* attested this *Truth* on
Earth, in those manifold uncontroull'd
Miracles which our *Saviour* wrought.

The *Water* attested the same, i. e. The
Purity of the *Doctrine* and *Life* of *Christ*
was a solid *Evidence* of it's *Divine Authority* and *Truth*.

And his precious *Blood* gave a remarkable
Attestation thereto, both as he thereby
Seal'd the *Truth* of his *Doctrine*, and
as his *Expiatory Sacrifice* answer'd the
manifold *Predictions* and *Types* of the
Old *Testament*.

Now when every true *Believer* finds
this

this *Heavily Doctrine* (which has been confirm'd by such solid *External Evidence* that is *Conspicuous* to all) producing so truly *Divine Effects* in his own Soul; Mortifying his corrupt Inclinations and Affections, restoring him to the amiable *Image* of God ; and forming him to *Universal Holiness* of *Heart* and *Life*, diffusing a sweet but solid and well grounded *Peace* into his *Conscience* ; raising him above this *World*, and giving him so happy a *Victory* over the *Temptations* thereof and forming in him such *Ennobling Desires* and *Joyful Hopes* of a *blessed Immortality* ; And when this *Internal Evidence* dos so entirely *conspire* and *harmonize* with that *External Evidence* I mention'd before ; This greatly strengthens his *Faith*, and renders it proof against the greatest *Temptations* to *Infidelity*. Nay this *Testimony* which every true Reliever carries in his own *Breast*, and which is founded on his own *Inward Sensation* and *Experience*, is so *satisfying* and *clear*, that it enables those that cannot *dispute* for their Religion to *dye* for it. 'Tis this that fortifys the *weakest Christians* against all the *Cavils* of the most *subtle Infidels*. All their *Objections* against Christianity are but to him an arguing against the inward
Sensation

Sensation and Experience of his own Soul. He is ready to lay to such perverse Cavillers as the Man cur'd of his Natural Blindness did to the unbelieving Jews, when they said, We know that God spake unto Moses, But as for this Fellow, we know not whence he is, Why (saith he) herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he has opened mine Eyes. Now we know that God beareth not Sinners, But if any Man worships him, and dos his Will him he beareth; If this Man were not of God he cou'd do nothing, Sec IX John 29, 30, 31, 32. — So may a true Believer say, 'Tis a Strange thing that you know not from whence Christ is, or whether he be the Son of God and the Author of Eternal Life. For my own part, I actually find by happy Experience, That as his Promises have begotten me to the Living Hope of a blessed Immortality, so his Sanctifying Grace has fram'd and moulded my Soul for it, and given me some sweet foretastes of it, even such as have rendred all things contemptible in my Eyes that stand in competition with it. And shall I doubt of the reality of that Eternal Life of which I find the Principle and seed in my own Soul? Shall I question, Whether he will
bring

bring me to the Possession of that Heavenly Inheritance, when he has already given me the Earnest of it in my own Heart?

But

II. We may hence farther Infer, *How little there is of true and Sincere Faith in the Christian World.*

For alas, 'Tis but few that carry any such Inward Testimony to the Truth of Christianity in what they themselves feel and know of the Divine Efficacy and power of it. Alas the Faith of the generality of pretended Christians is but a slight and Superficial Assent that makes no transforming

Change on their Hearts and Lives. 'Tis but as the Apostle James Styles it, a Dead Faith

II. James ult. It does not realize to their

minds the glorious things of an Unseen Eternal State; It does not elevate their

Affections to the things that are above; It does not cast their Souls into a Divine

and Heavenly mould. And therefore they carry no such Inward Testimony to

the Truth of Christianity in their own Breasts.

And this leads me to add,

III. We may hence see, *How little*

wonder it is, That Infidelity shou'd so much spread and prevail in this degenerate Age.

Alas, 'tis but few whose Faith is vital

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and Sincere. 'Tis but few therefore that carry this *Confirming Testimony* to the Truth of the *Gospel* in their own Souls. And 'tis no wonder that those shou'd be *unstedfast* in their *Profession* of the *Christian Doctrine* who never felt the *Transforming Power* of it. 'Tis no wonder that those that *put away a good Conscience* shou'd make *Shipwrack of the Faith* — 1 Tim. 1 19. Nay those who abandon themselves to the *Conduct* of their *sensual Lusts*, and run with a wicked World in to all *Excess of Riot*, are under a strong *Temptation* to *renounce* those *Holy Doctrines* which they cannot *reconcile* with their *ungodly practice*, and to fall in with those *Principles of Infidelity* that are more *favourable* to their beloved *Lusts*. In this Case the strength of their *vitious Inclinations* will give a powerful *bias* to their *Judgments* towards the wretched Cause of *Infidelity*, The most being *unwilling* to believe what they are very *unwilling* should be true. Since therefore there is so very little of the *Life and Power* of *Practical Christianity* left among us, 'Tis no way strange, That the *Contagion of Infidelity* spreads so fast, when the generality are so prepar'd to receive the fatal *Infection*. And there is no *Effectual way* of putting

a stop to it but by *Recovering and Restoring the inward and vital power of the Christian Religion, which is a far different thing from the bare External Profession of it.*

IV. We may hence also see, *Why the Faith of the Generality of Sincere Christians is comparatively so weak and wavering.*

Did we feel more of the *Genuine and Excellent Effects* of the *Doctrine of Christianity* upon our own Souls, our *Assent* to it and *inward Persuasion* concerning the *Truth* of it wou'd be more *vigorous and strong*. Were our Souls more entirely *deliver'd into the Mould and Form of that Heavenly Doctrine* we profess to believe, did the *Truth* we have been taught more powerfully engage us to *put off the Old Man and put on the New*, (by a due progress and proficiency in *Universal Holiness*); Did we feel more of the *Efficacy of Divine Truth* in *conforming* us more to the *Nature and Will of God*; Were his *Promises* a more abundant *Spring of Consolation and Joy*; Did the *Prospect* of a *future Glory* deaden us more to this *World*, and more powerfully *elevate* our *Affections* to a *better*; We shou'd not then be liable to so manifold *Doubts* concerning the *Truth of Chri-*

stianity, nor have so woful remains of *Darkness* and *Unbelief* to struggle with. Whereas now we usually find, That as the *Sanctifying Impression* of these Divine Truths on our own Souls is so *weak* as to be scarce discernable to the view of our own Consciences, so accordingly our *Ajent* unto 'em is comparatively *weak* and *wavering*; And we have great reason to take up the complaint of that poor Man in the Gospel, *Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief.* IX *Mark* 24.

V. Let us then be more concern'd to have this *Testimony*, this *Internal Evidence* and *Proof*, of the Truth of Christianity in our own Souls.

And this Exhortation I shall enforce by suggesting something by way of *Direction* and *Motive*.

For *Direction*.

1. Let us often review the *External Evidence* we have for the Truth of Christianity in order to the confirming our Belief of it.

'Tis the due Consideration of those *External Evidences* and *Proofs* that must be instrumental both to beget and nourish this great Principle of *Divine Faith* in us.

We shou'd often contemplate the *Excellency* and *Sublimity* of the Doctrine of
the

and Proof of Christianity. 181

the Gospel, and particularly of this grand Article of it, *That God has given us Eternal Life, and This Life is in his Son.* We should deeply consider the admirable *harmony and correspondence* of what the Gospel declares concerning it, both with the *Principles of Natural Religion*, and with the *gradual Revelations* of the Divine Will to the foregoing Age. We shou'd diligently observe the admirable tendency of this Heavenly Doctrine to advance the glory of God, and to restore his Kingdom among Men, and to recover us to the *Image and Favour* of God, and to dispose us for a State of consummate *Happiness* in the *Enjoyment* of him. We should often contemplate what a clear *Attestation* was given from Heaven to the Son of God, both by an *audible voice from Heaven*, and by that more *silent* but no less *convincing Argument* which his *numerous uncontroll'd Miracles* (the visible Effects of a Divine and Almighty Power) afforded to confirm his Divine Mission. We shou'd seriously consider what *sensible Proofs* our Blessed Saviour gave of this great Truth, by his *Resurrection and Ascension to Heaven*, by his glorious *Appearances from thence*, and above all by his marvellous *Effusion*

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Effusion of his Holy Spirit in the Extraordinary Gifts of it, and those so long continued in his Church, and this according to his own Express Promise and Prediction upon his departure out of this World. Let us then attentively bear what all these Witnesses both in Heaven and Earth depose concerning this Divine Truth, And we shall find that their Testimony deserves and will every way justify our firmest Assent thereunto. For (as the Evangelist well observes) These things are written for this very End, That we might believe, That Jesus is the Christ (or the Anointed) the Son of God, and that believing we might have Life thro' his Name, —XX John 31. Let then this full stream of External Evidence be well digested in our minds, that it may carry powerful Conviction into 'em, and form in us a strong and lively Persuasion of these important and necessary Truths. And the stronger this Persuasion is, We shall feel the more the influence of what we do thus assent unto upon so solid Evidence on our own Minds.

But that leads me to add,

20 Let us be especially concern'd, *That our Divine Faith produce all it's genuine and vital Effects upon our own Souls.*

21 Let us by no means content our selves with

with a *dead and unoperative Faith*. Do we believe the Gospel to be indeed a Declaration of the Mind and Will of God by his Incarnate Son, Let us not *bold this Truth in Unrighteousness*, but endeavour to *act conformably to such a Belief*. Let the *Assent* of our Judgments to the Offers of *Reconciliation* with God thro' the Blood of Christ, produce in us a cordial *Acceptance* of 'em by a *penitent Return* to him; And let those Divine Truths form us to a just abhorrence of Sin, and Reverential Dread of the Justice of God, to an ingenuous Resolution of *dying to Sin and Living to him that died for us and rose again*. Let our Belief of what the Gospel reveals concerning the Matchless and Transcendant Love of God manifested to us in the Son of his Love, form in us an *Ardent and Superlative Love* of our God and Saviour, and bring us under the powerful *Constraints* thereof, and engage us to an *imitation* thereof by all *fitable Acts* of *God-like Love to Men*, even to our *Enemies themselves*. Let our Assent to that glorious Promise of *Eternal Life* in the *World to come*, extinguish more and more our *inordinate Love to this World*, and enable us to *conquer its manifold Temptations*,

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tions, and to keep our selves unspotted from its hainous Pollutions ; Let our Belief of it render that *Eternal Life* the *Object* of our most *vehement Desires*, our most *delightful Hopes* and *vigorous Prosecution*. Let our *Faith* bring our Souls under the *attractive Power* of the *World* to come, and give the glorious *Objects* thereof a *transforming* and *commanding* Influence upon our Hearts and Lives, And then indeed What we *experience* and *feel* of Christianity will be a solid *additional Evidence* of the *Truth* of it. Then we shall be ready to say to those that propose to us the *External Evidences* of the *Truth* of Christianity as the believing Inhabitants of *Sychar* did to the *Samaritan Woman*, *Now we believe, not because of thy saying, (Not meerly on this External Evidence.) For we have heard him our selves and know, That this is the Christ the Saviour of the World, 4 John 42.* So may we say, We now know by what he has done to reconcile us to God, and bring us nigh to him, To restore his Image in our own Souls, to beget us to the hope of, and to render us meet for, the *Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, By this we know and perceive, *That God has given us Eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son.*
You

You see then, That there is such a near Alliance and Connexion between our Faith and those other Graces that are the genuine Fruits thereof, That as the Exercises of our Divine Faith tend to excite and improve all other Graces in us, so the Vigour and Activity of those Graces gives such a Testimony and Proof to the Truth of Christianity as greatly tends to strengthen our Belief of it. We must believe the Heavenly Doctrine that we may live up to it, And the more we live up to it, We shall be the more strongly persuaded of the Truth of it.

I shall only add a Motive or two to enforce this Advice, And

1. Let it be consider'd, That such a Faith as does not by its genuine and Excellent Effects furnish us with such an inward Evidence and Proof of the Truth of Christianity, is but a dead Faith, that will neither justify nor save us.

To such in whom that Christianity they profess is but a lifeless and dead Opinion, I may justly use the Expostulation of the Apostle James, What does it profit my Brethren, tho' a Man say he hath Faith, and have not Works? Can Faith save him? No, It can no more save him, than his bare good Wishes or good Words, can warm

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or fill his naked and destitute Brethren,
See 2 James 13, 14, &c. 'Tis not thy
believing, That God has given us *Eternal
Life* and that *this Life* is in his Son,
will be any way available to bring
thee to the actual *Possession* of it,
unless thou *acceptest* of the Son of
God as the *Author* of it, and *choosest* that
Eternal Life as thy *Felicity* and *Portion*
(giving it the preference before every
thing in this World that stands in com-
petition with it) and *aspirest* to it in that
course of *persevering Holiness* which the
Gospel recommends as the only *Way*
that leads to it.

2. Let it be farther consider'd, *That*
if thy Faith do furnish thee with this inward
Testimony, this Evidence and Proof, of the
Truth of Christianity, it will put *Life and*
Vigour into thy *Profession* and render it tru-
ly *Delightful*.

O at what a rate may a true Christian
act when he finds in himself the solid
grounds of such a comfortable *Persuasion*,
That God has given us Eternal Life, and
this Life is in his Son? With what a
lively *Faith* may he offer his Prayers for
Eternal Life, when he finds the *Seed and*
Principle of it sown in his own Soul?
How may this encourage his comfortable
Persuasion,

and Proof of Christianity 187

Persuasion, That he who has begun this good Work will finish it ! And he that has lay'd the Foundation will also lay the Top-stone ! Nay how will the strong Persuasion of Eternal Life, and the satisfying Sense of his own Interest therein, tune his Heart for that great Duty of Praise, and enlarge his Soul in grateful Acknowledgments to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten him thro' his Resurrection to such a Living Hope, to such an Incorruptible Inheritance ! See 1 Pet. I. 3, 4. — How attentively will he bear, How deeply will his Soul be affected with that Heavenly Doctrine that has rais'd him to these Divine Hopes, and tends to mould him for that State of endless Perfection and Glory which he is made an Heir and Expectant of ! How delightful will all occasions be of renewing his Communion with that Blessed Saviour, whom he Esteems and loves as the Purchaser, and the Giver of Eternal Life ! What pleasure will he find in commemorating that Death of Christ which was the invaluable Price by which he obtain'd for us this glorious Gift of Eternal Life ! With what satisfaction will he meditate on those Promises which are the Deed of Conveyance and

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the grand *Charter* of his *Eternal Hopes* !
 With what Joy will he receive the *Seals*
 of God's Gracious Covenant, that are
 the *Pledges* of his own Interest in it,
 and particularly in this inestimable *Bles-*
sing of it ! With what *Transports* of
 Delight will he partake of those *Me-*
morials of the *Body* and *Blood* of *Christ*,
 by which as the *External Signs* a gracious
 God puts into his Hands a Sealed *Pardon*
 and *Right to Eternal Life* ! How will
 what he already feels of the saving
 Power of *Christ*, raise him to the joyful
 Expectation of receiving at last the End
 of his Faith, even his consummate *Sal-*
vation !

B NO 63

FINIS

ON THE
MINISTRY
OF
ANGELS.

FROM
I Hebr. ult.

By J. B.

DUBLIN:

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MDCCLXXII

A SERMON, &c.

From I Hebr. ult.

Are they not all Ministering Spirits sent forth to Minister for them, who shall be Heirs of Salvation.

WHEN I seriously ponder how much the Scriptures speak concerning the *Ministry of the Holy Angels*; What considerable *Benefits* we now derive from our present *Communion* with 'em, And how great an *Ingredient* of our future *Happiness* our more *immediate Converse* with 'em in the *Heavenly Regions* will be, I cannot but think that this important Subject is too little *consider'd* and *improv'd* in our serious *Meditations* upon it. For tho' we cannot too carefully guard against that gross *Extreme* into which those of the *Romish Church* have run, by their *Idolatrous* and *Superstitious Excesses* of *Devotion* towards those *Blessed Spirits*; Yet there is no reason why we shou'd run into the *other Extreme*, by our *overlooking* their kind *Ministrations*, and forgetting

forgetting the *Relation* we bear unto 'em, as a part of the same Blessed *Community*. And therefore that I may both lay before you, what God has been pleas'd to reveal to us concerning the use he makes of 'em for our Advantage and welfare, and also propose to you such practical *Instructions* concerning your Duty as the Contemplation of this Truth dos naturally suggest, I have chosen to insist on these Excellent Words of the Inspired Writer to the *Hebrews*.

As to the *Occasion* of 'em I need only suggest to you, That the *Inspired Writer* in this Chapter undertakes to show the *Superiority* of our Blessed Saviour over the *Highest Angels*. Which he dos from various Arguments. From the peculiar *Relation* the Father claims to him as his only begotten Son, even in such a Sense as *Angels* themselves are not, *Verse 5*, From their Obligation to worship him, which plainly implys their *Inferiority* and *Subjection* by whom this *Homage* was to be pay'd, *Verse 6*. And from the *Sovereign Dominion* delegated to him over that *World*, which he at first made (as well as since came to redeem and new-make); Whereas *Angels* are under him employ'd only in *Ministry* and *Service*.
Christ

Christ sits at the Father's Right Hand, even on his Throne, Vested with Royal Authority; But Angels stand, and attend there to execute the orders they receive. They are *Ministring Spirits*, sent forth at his pleasure, (for the Scripture elsewhere clearly asserts their being Subject to his *Mediatorial Authority*, See 1 Eph. 21, 22.—1 Pet. III. 22.—5 Rev. 6) as *Minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation*.

And this Excellent Truth I come now to consider, viz. That *Holy Angels are Ministring Spirits sent forth to Minister to them that are Heirs of Salvation*.

And in treating thereon I shall

First, Consider, What is here briefly suggested to us concerning the *Nature of Holy Angels*.

Secondly, More fully enquire into what is here intimated concerning their *Office and Work*.

First, I shall only briefly consider, What is suggested to us concerning their *Nature*. They are *Spirits*.

And by this Title of *Spirits*, without any other Addition, They are distinguished from *Human Souls*; Which tho' they are also in Scripture call'd *Spirits*, yet to discriminate them from this Noble Order

and Rank of Intellectual Beings they are call'd the Spirits of all Flesh — XVI Num. 12. XXVII. 16. i. e. Spirits that Dwell in Flesh that inhabit and are confin'd unto the Tabernacles of Clay, these Earthly and Mortal Bodys. So that 'tis highly probable, that Angels are entirely unembodied Spirits. And tho' they have of ten assum'd Corporeal Vehicles, even of so gross consistence as to be visible to Human Sense, yet 'tis as evident they cou'd at pleasure put 'em off again; And either they are wholly free from confinement to any Body whatsoever, or at least to any so gross and sensible, so unweildy and unactive as ours are.

But when the Scripture says, They are Spirits, it does not determine, whether there be any specifick difference in their Nature and in their Essential Faculties and Powers between them and Human Souls; Or only a difference in the Degrees of Excellency. That there is the latter seems past doubt from the Account the Scriptures give of 'em, i. e. That what Powers, or Perfections they seem to have in common with Human Souls, they possess in a far more eminent measure and degree. Thus both Angels and Human Souls are endued with Final Activity. But we

Read

Read such Instances of the mighty Force and Power of those Superior Spirits, as not only vastly Transcend the present Power of our Souls while encumbered with these Earthly Bodies, but wou'd probably much Transcend their activity even in their separated State. As we may see in the Instance of the Angel that in one Night slew 185000 in the Assyrian Camp, 2 Kings 19. 35. And the like might be interr'd from several Destructive Judgments which Angels were employ'd as the Executioners of, and that suppose vast power in the Agent that effects 'em. And accordingly the Psalmist speaks of Angels as *excelling in strength* and thereby eminently qualify'd to Execute the Orders of their Heavenly Sovereign, 103 Ps. 20. So tho' Angels as well as Human Souls are endued with Intellectual Powers, yet doubtless their Understandings far exceed ours in their capacity and manner of knowing, and in the Compass and Extent of their Knowledge. And hence 'tis mention'd as a Character of Extraordinary Wisdom to be wise according to the Wisdom of an Angel of God, to know all things that are on the Earth, 2 Sam. 14. 20. And the like difference may be suppos'd as to all other Intellectual Excellencies that are in

general common to them with *Human Souls*. Those glorious *Spirits* are almost as far elevated above our's in the degree of 'em (at least at present) as the lofty *Regions* they inhabit are above this *Earth*, to which our *Souls* are confin'd while they dwell in *Flesh*; I say at least, at present, because how far the *Intellectual Powers* of perfected *Spirits* will be exalted and enlarg'd in that future State wherein we are said to be ~~like~~ like or equal to *Angels*, we cannot with any certainty conclude.

This is all I shall suggest as to the *Nature* of those *Excellent Spirits*. And that there are such *Spirits* is not only undeniably Evident from the *Holy Scriptures* that so frequently speak of 'em, but it has been the current Opinion of the *Heathen World* it self, and seems to be one of those Truths that have been handed down by an *Universal Tradition* amongst at least all the most civiliz'd Nations of the Earth. But for us that own the Authority of the *Scriptures*, The matter can admit of no dispute.

I come therefore

Secondly, To enquire more largely into what is here intimated concerning the Office and Work of *Holy Angels*.

They

They are (saith the Text) *Ministring Spirits sent forth to Minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation.*

Where we may distinctly consider,

I. The special Object of their Ministration, viz. Those who shall be heirs of Salvation.

II. Their Deputation to their Office, They are sent forth.

III. Their Ministration or Service itself.

I. We have here the Object of their Ministration, or those about whom their Ministry and Service is employ'd, viz. Those who shall be Heirs of Salvation. Or those who shall Inherit or possess that summate Salvation which Jesus Christ came to be the Author of.

But we must not hence infer, That all the Service and Ministry of Angels is employ'd about Good Men. For doubtless they are also often sent as the Executioners of God's Righteous Vengeance against the Wicked. And they are also the Ministers of Divine Providence in the ordering the General Affairs of Kingdoms, and highly Instrumental in Effecting many of those Remarkable Revolutions and Changes that happen therein. As we may justly infer from

from what the *Angel* that appear'd to *Daniel* relates to him, — *X Dan. 13, 20, 21.* — and *XI Dan. 1.* — And accordingly the Learned *Mr. Mede* has said much to render it probable that the *Seven Spirits* that are said to be before the *Throne of God*, and are compar'd to *Seven Lamps burning there.* *IV Rev. 5,* — And are also said to be the *Eyes of the Lord sent forth into all the Earth,* — *5 Rev. 6.* — compar'd with *4 Zech. 10.* — must be understood of *Seven Archangels* as the *Principal Ministers* of Divine Providence in the Government of this Lower World. For that there is a considerable *Difference* among those *Blessed Spirits* themselves in point of *Dignity* and *Authority* seems evident from the very Name of *Archangels* as well as from those Different *Titles of Thrones and Dominions, Principalities and Powers*, by which the particular *Members* that compose that *Heavenly Host*, are *Distinguish'd one from another.* See *1 Col. 16.* So much indeed we may in *General* conclude, tho' to descend to *Particulars*, and pretend to give a *Distinct Account* of the several *Orders* of that *Celestial Hierarchy*, is but the presumptuous folly of such as (contrary to the *Apostle's* caution) *Intrude into things they have not seen,* — *2 Col.*

aid We must not then think the *Ministry of Angels* entirely confin'd to the *Heirs of Salvation*. But we may justly hence infer, That their beneficial *Ministry* is chiefly employ'd about *them*, and they are the *principal Objects* of their *Inspection* and *Care*. And indeed their *Ministrations* that respect the general Affairs of Kingdoms and States, have often an *ultimate reference* to the good of the *Church*; Those *Alterations* or *Revolutions* they bring about being *Serviceable* to the *Designs* of Divine *Providence* for the *Enlargement* or *Etablissement* of his own *Kingdom*. So that the *welfare* of *Good Men*, and especially the *promoting* their *Final Salvation* is the most *Valuable End* which their *Ministrations* are intended to subserve. 'Tis in the *prosecution* of his gracious design for bringing those to the full *Possession* of the *Heavenly Glory* whom he hath made the *Heirs* of it, that God chiefly makes use of the *Service* of those *Excellent Spirits*. 'Tis chiefly for their *Advantage* and *Benefit*, for their *Comfort* and *Encouragement*, that these *Attendants* on the *Heavenly Court* are so often *sens forth*, on particular kind *Offices* and *Errands* here below.

Which leads me to consider,

II. The

On the Ministry

II. Deputation of Holy Angels to this Office, They are Ministering Spirits, sent forth.

If it be here enquir'd, By whom they are sent forth?

Answer. They are indeed the Angels of God, the great Lord of the Heavenly Hosts, whose Commands they are employ'd to execute, and by his Order they are sent. They are his Messengers, and the Ministers of his Providence. But they are also subjected to the Authority of Christ as Mediator; and have their particular Ministrations and Services appointed by him, by whom the Kingdom of God in this lower World is now administr'd. To him even those Heavenly Principalities bow the Knee, as the great Lord of the *Heaven*, or *Invisible World*, II Phil. 10. — I Rev. 18. And therefore those Seven Spirits before the Throne that are call'd the Eyes of the Lord, 4 Zech. 10. are call'd the Eyes of the Lamb, 5 Rev. 6. as being the Ministers of his Providence who have All Authority in Heaven as well as on Earth put into his Hands by the Father.

And even this Consideration dos the more fully assure us, That their Ministry shall be employ'd for the Advantage and

Benefits of his *Members*, who are the designed *Heirs of Salvation*. For doubtless our Blessed Saviour will use their *Services* chiefly for accomplishing the great ends of his *Mediatorial Government*.

Which leads me

III. To consider, *The Ministration and Service of Holy Angels in self*; Or wherein they are *Ministring Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation*.

And here we may distinguish between the particular *Instances* of their *Ministry* that seem *Extraordinary*, and those that are more *Ordinary* and *Stated*.

First, There are some *Instances* of their *Ministry* that seem *Extraordinary* and *Occasional* only.

And such I account most of those to have been wherein *Angels* in their *Appearance* have assum'd a *visible Shape* to deliver some particular *Messages* to good *Men*.

Nothing is more frequent under the *Old Testament* than the *Historical Account* of such *Apparitions* of *Angels*, sent on some such particular *Errands* to God's faithful *Servants*. For tho' I deny not but some of those *Passages* commonly alledg'd to this purpose must be apply'd to *Jesus Christ* (*the Angel of the Covenant*),

yet I think it past all doubt, that many of 'em are to be understood of *Created Angels*, according to the most obvious Sense of the Words. It was an *Angel* that *twice appeared to Hagar*, 16 and 21 *Gen.* *Angels* at several times appeared to *Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Gideon, Manoah and his Wife, To David, To Daniel, &c. To Joseph, To the Blessed Virgin, To Zacharias, To Peter, To Cornelius, To Paul, &c.* and usually to deliver some *particular Message* to 'em, either concerning what God requir'd them to do in some particular cases, or what he was about himself to do on their behalf.

'Tis indeed true, That these *sensible Appearances of Angels* on such *special occasions* are not so common since the Coming of Christ and the Establishment of the Christian Church as they seem to have been before.

For tho' I cannot say, nor do I think that there have been no such particular favour granted since then to any in the Christian Church, yet doubtless the frequent *Apparitions of Angels* which the *Poish Legences* abound with in the Lives of their pretended Saints, are meer *Fabulous Relations*, not only destitute of any credible Evidence, but such as generally
carry

carry the visible Marks of *Falshood* and *Forgery* engraven upon 'em. So that we are to look on such *sensible Visits* pay'd by these Inhabitants of the other World to good Men here, as *Extraordinary things*, and what are not to be now usually expected. And perhaps one reason hereof may be, That we who have a far clearer Declaration of the Divine Will brought by the Son of God himself, do the less need any such particular Messages for our *Instruction* and *Direction* brought by *Holy Angels*.

But we are chiefly concern'd to consider,

Secondly, Those *Instances* of the *Ministry* of *Holy Angels*, which are more *Ordinary* and *Stated*, and such as good Men may in every Age expect the Benefit of.

And we may consider their *Ministry*, as it is exercis'd both about our *Bodies*, and our *Souls*.

I. *About our Bodies*.

And here the Scriptures frequently and plainly intimate to us, That the great God makes considerable use of their *Ministry* for our Preservation from manifold *Evils* and *Dangers* to which our frail Nature is liable. And accordingly we read that the *Angel of the Lord encampeth*

round about them that fear him and delivers
 'em, 34 Ps. 7. And over such, he
 gives his Angels Charge to keep 'em in all
 their ways, and bear 'em up in their Hands,
 least they shou'd dash their Foot against a
 Stone, 91 Ps. 11, 12. quoted 4 Mat. 6.
 And on that Account the Psalmist had
 observ'd in the Verse before, That no E-
 vil shou'd befall 'em, nor any Plague come
 nigh their Dwelling.

He constitutes them as it were our
 watchful Guardians to take care of our
 Safety, by warning us of our dangers, or
 interposing their Invisible Power to res-
 cue us from 'em. And little do we
 know or consider, How many wonderful
 deliverances from eminent (tho' sometimes
 unseen) Evils, and how much of our
 Protection and Success in our secular
 Concerns and Interests we owe to their vi-
 gilant Conduct and Invisible Aid. They
 that open'd the Prison-Doors to the Apostles,
 5 Acts 19. and afterwards particularly
 knockt off the Fetters of Peter, 12 Acts 7. have
 often in as real tho' in a more impercepti-
 ble manner rescued good Men out of the
 Hands of their persecuting Enemies, or
 sav'd 'em from the Brink of Temporal
 Destruction. And indeed most credible
 History presents us with many very memo-
 rable

table and marvellous Deliverances of good Men from such seemingly inevitable perils of ruin, as cannot reasonably be ascrib'd to any other Cause than the *insensible but powerful Agency* of those good Spirits. And that they are often assisting to us in all Affairs of considerable Moment and Consequence we may probably infer from what *Abraham* said to his Servant *Eliezer* when sent on a particular Errand, *The Lord will send his Angel with thee and prosper thy way*, XXIV Gen. 7. The Truth is, We that know so little of the *Extent* of their *Power* and their various ways of employing it for our good and relief, can as little comprehend all the *Advantages* and *Benefits* that even in respect of our *Bodily Welfare* we derive from their *Ministry* and all the good *Offices* thereof.

But we must farther consider their *Ministry* as Exercis'd.

II. *About our Souls.*

And tho' we may perhaps in some respects more easily comprehend, how their *Ministry* may contribute to the *Safety* of our *Bodies*, then to the *Welfare* of our *Souls*, yet I think the Text it self gives us just ground to conclude that their *Ministry* is chiefly serviceable to promote the great Design of our *final Salvation*.

Salvation. And indeed I see no ground to doubt, but that *Holy Angels* are as capable by their *Assistance* to promote our *Eternal Blessedness*; As the *Devil* and his *Angels* are to promote the *Ruin* and *Destruction* of miserable *Sinners*. We are sure their *Intellectual Powers* and *Capacities* are as *large* and *considerable*, as those of *fallen Angels*; And we are sure that they are prompted with as ardent *Zeal* to promote our *Salvation*, as *Devils* are by wretched *Envy* and *Malice* to secure our *Damnation*. Nor can we conceive, That the *Devils* have a more free access to our *Minds* either to suggest *Evil Thoughts* immediately, or by the *Mediation* of our *Fancies*, than good *Angels* have to suggest *Good and Holy Thoughts*. So that whatever *Methods Evil Angels* use to entangle or harden us in a *Course of Sin*, and thereby lead us to *Perdition*, the like *Methods* on the other hand may *Holy Angels* use in countermining their design, and frustrating their Attempts, and rescuing us out of their *Power*. Those *Blessed Spirits* are said to *rejoyce in our Conversion*, and doubtless they are as forward to promote it by their *Zealous Endeavours*, XV *Luke 10*. And they that *rejoyce in our Conversion* will be as ready to farther our

Progress

Progress in Grace and Holiness; by keeping us out of the Road of Temptation, by suggesting powerful Arguments for repelling those we meet with; By encouraging us in our Duty, strengthening us in our Spiritual conflicts, and supporting us under our Afflictions and Troubles. And if our Blessed Saviour himself under his violent Agony needed an *Angel to come and strengthen him*, — 22. *Luke 43*, — (most probably by suggesting some Reviving and Encouraging Considerations to him) much more are they capable of giving their assistance to us, and much more may we be suppos'd to need it. And we have some ground to suppose that as *Holy Angels* are peculiarly present in our *Religious Assemblies*, so their *Ministry* is Serviceable to promote our Devotion there. The very posture of the *Cherubim* over the *Mercy Seat* seems to imply the Presence of the *Holy Angels* in all our Religious Addresses; And the reason wherewith the Apostle *Paul* enforces his caution to the Christian *Women* that they shou'd be veil'd or cover'd in their sacred Assemblies, viz. *Because of the Angels*, intimates to us, That the consideration of their presence shou'd engage us to due decency in our External Behaviour, as the sense of the Divine presence shou'd engage

engage us to inward Sincerity and Fervour in our Devotions, Nay Solomon cautions us against rashness in our solemn Vows from this Consideration, Suffer not thy Mouth to curse thy Flesh to Sin (i. e. by making Vows thou wilt not perform) neither say thou before the Angel that it was no Error, 9 Eccl. 6. i. e. The Angel of Prayer (as the Jewish Writers expound the place) who is the Witness of thy Devotions. Nay, Holy Angels not only attend us in our Devotions but are the diligent Spectators and Observers of our whole Conversation; We are in our Christian Warfare a Spectacle to Angels as well as Men, 1 Cor. IV. 9. And the Apostle Paul therefore thought it not improper to charge Timothy not only before God and Jesus Christ, but also before the Elect Angels, that he shou'd observe his Instructions, 1 Tim. V. 20. And our Blessed Saviour himself threatens to deny those that are ashamed of his Words, not only before his Father but also before the Holy Angels. They then that take such strict Notice of our deportment and carriage, must be suppos'd very assiduous and constant in their Attendance, and ready upon all occasions to assist us in our pious Designs and Attempts. And we may justly suppose that those

those Blessed Spirits that relieve us in our other conflicts do not leave us in our most formidable conflict with our last Enemy; but are then especially serviceable in confirming our Divine Faith and Hope, and relieving us against the Terrors of Death, and assisting us against the violent Assaults of *the Powers of Darkness* in our last and most difficult struggle with 'em. And we have very positive assurance, That those who here promote our final perseverance in Grace and Holiness will most gladly do the last Office of Kindness and Friendship in *conveying* our departing Souls (as happy Conquerors) not only with *Safety* but with *Honour* and *Triumph* into the *Heavenly Mansions*. We read of *Angels* (even several of that *Heavenly Host*) being appointed as a *Guard* to conduct the Spirit of poor *Lazarus* into *Abraham's Bosom*, XVI Luke 22. Nay their *Ministry* seems to extend to our very *Bodies* themselves when in the Grave, for we read of their being employ'd as *Agents* in raising 'em thence. That *when the Son of Man* shall come in the *Heavens* with *Power* and *great Glory* he shall send his *Angels* to gather the *Elect* from the *Four Winds* from one End of *Heaven* to the other, 24 *Matth.* 30, 31.

And this I take to be a brief *Summary*

of what the Scriptures assert concerning the *Ministry of Holy Angels* for the benefit of the designed *Heirs of Salvation*. We derive all these *real* and most *valuable* Advantages from it.

It remains then that we *Apply* this Subject, and consider the several *Practical Instructions* it suggests to us.

And

I. We may hence infer, *That this Doctrine is so far from giving any Countenance to the Practice of the Roman Church in their Invocation of Holy Angels that it furnishes us with a strong Argument against it.*

It gives no just ground for it.

What tho' *Holy Angels* are often sent at the pleasure of God to *Minister to us*; Will it therefore follow, That we must *pray to 'em*, and (as is the common Practice recommended by the Romish Clergy to their Profelytes) solemnly devote ourselves to their *Worship and Service*? *Ministers and Magistrates* are the *Ministers of God* for the good of those that are committed to their Charge; May we therefore in the same *place* and *posture* in which we offer our Prayers to God, make our Religious Addresses to them also? The Scriptures are so far from directing us to draw this *Inference* from it, that they do

as solemnly caution us against the *Worshipping Angels* on the one hand, as they clearly assert their *Ministring to us* on the other. Nay, the Apostle speaks of *Worshipping Angels* as a virtual *Renunciation of Christ* the only *Head and Mediator*, by whom we must direct all our Addresses to God. Nay, he condemns the very *pretence* on which that *Worship* is founded, viz. *voluntary Humility*, (Or as those of the *Romish Church* speak) *honourary Subjection to Angels* on the account of their *Transcendant Excellencies*. And he adds this farther censure of their Practice, *That they intruded into those things they had not seen*; II Col. 18, 19. A censure that manifestly agrees to the *Romish Church*, who so frequently pretend this or that *City or Country* to be under the *Protection and Tutelage* of this or that particular *Angel or Saint*, and so confidently tho' groundlessly assert, *That every one has their particular Guardian-Angels*, and accordingly urge 'em by certain *Forms of Devotion* to *commit themselves to their care* and *to implore their Protection*. Nay, the Scripture frequently proposes the *Blessed God* as the *only Object of Religious Worship*, and cautions us against giving any part of his *peculiar Honour* to his *Creatures*. And we cannot excuse the practice of the

Roman Church in praying to *Angels* from the guilt of invading the peculiar rights of the Divine Honour and Glory. For our Praying to 'em, and particularly when we offer up *Mental Prayers* (which the *Council of Trent* particularly allows) supposes 'em to have that *unlimited knowledge* of whatever is done and said here below, Nay, that knowledge of our very *Hearts* themselves that can only belong unto *God*. He only ought to be pray'd to, who can hear all our *Requests*. And as *God* alone can do so; So to *Invoke* any created *Inhabitant of the other World*, does in the Nature of the thing, whatever our *Intention* may be, ascribe the *incommunicable perfections* of *God* to 'em, and consequently is no better than *vile Idolatry*. Nay, our praying to any other *Inhabitant* of the *Invisible World*, and that in the same posture we do to *God*, leaves no *External and Visible Distinction* between the *Worship* we pay to that *Supreme Being*, and that we pay to his *Creatures*.

And as this *Doctrine* gives no countenance to the *Worship* of *Angels*, so on the contrary, It suggests to us a solid Argument against it, and that urg'd by an *Angel himself*. For when we read of *John's* falling down at the *Angel's Feet* to *Worship* him,
He

He rejects what he offer'd from this very Consideration, *See thou do it not, I am thy Fellow-Servant, and of thy Brethren that have the Testimony of Jesus, Worship God,—22 Rev. 8, 9—So 19—10—* They are but *Ministring Spirits, Fellow-Servants* with us to the same God, and therefore no way fit *Objects* of our *Homage*; All *Worship* being the *Homage* of a *Subject* to his *Sovereign* and *Lord*. They therefore that have no *Dominion* over us can claim no such *Acknowledgments* of *Subjection* to 'em. And indeed were it *Lawful* at any time to give an *Angel* any *Religious Homage*, It must be so when he *Visibly Appears*. But we see here, The *Angel* positively *refuses* it. And none can Reasonably entertain so sottish a thought of this inspir'd *Apostle*, as to imagine he mistook him whom he calls an *Angel* for *God*, or that he wou'd have pay'd him the same *Inward Devotion* he paid to that *Ever Blessed Being*. And sure that is but a *Miserable Evasion* which one of the great *Champions* of the *Romish Church* here uses, "*That the Angels out of Reverence to the Human Nature of Christ refuse to be Worship'd since his coming, But tho' they do well out of Humility to Refuse it, yet John did well to give it, and so do we.* For sure if the *Angel*

Angel had just Reason to refuse it, We have the same not to give it. 'Tis but small respect to obtrude it upon 'em against their Will. And doubtless they give the Church of Rome little thanks for paying 'em that Devotion that so plainly Entrenches both on the Honour of God, and of Christ as Mediator. 'Tis plain the *Angel* assigns not his own Modesty as a reason of his Refusal, but such a Reason as supposes it Unlawful; I am thy Fellow-Servant, &c. Worship God. q. d. Thou owest me no such Homage, who am but thy Fellow Servant, Give it therefore to God, to whom alone 'tis due from us both. And this is a Reason Common to all Ages, and always in force to render this Practice Inexcusable.

II. Let us hence be Excited to adore the Condescension and Goodness of God to us in Employing Angels themselves to Minister to us.

And truly when we consider, What despicable Creatures we are, how unworthy of the Notice and Care of that Sovereign Majesty, and especially how undeserving of his Favours our Undutiful carriage has rendred us, We cannot but esteem it as a Marvellous Instance of his Gracious regard to us, That he shou'd
send

send even those that stand as *Attendants* on his Heavenly Throne, to take a particular care of our welfare, and give them a *charge* for our safety and Preservation. Nay, 'tis a wonderful Expression of his Love which our Saviour intimates, when he cautions us against *despising one of the least of his Disciples*, from this Consideration, *That in Heaven their Angels do always behold the face of his Father in Heaven*, 18 *Matth.* 10. — 'Tis true indeed I cannot see any clear ground to conclude from hence, That every particular Christian has a particular Angel assign'd for his Guardian, tho' that seems to have been a current opinion among the *Jews* as well as among the *Heathens*. For we sometimes read of many Angels attending one particular Saint. A considerable Number attended in the Vision of *Jacob's Ladder*, XXVIII *Gen.* 12. And a numerous Host of 'em surrounded the Prophet *Elijah*, 2 *Kings* VI 17. And many were appointed to convey the Soul of deceased *Lazarus* to *Abraham's Bosom*, XVI *Luke* 22. Nay, the Psalmist speaking of every particular good Man, saith, *He shall give his Angels charge over thee*, XCI *Pf.* 11. Whereas elsewhere, One Angel was a sufficient Guard to the whole Camp of *Israel*. So that there

there seems to be no solid ground for supposing that our *Saviour* design'd in these Words to insinuate the Truth of that Opinion, concerning every good *Man* having a particular *Angel* as his constant *Attendant* or *Guardian*. But I think we may justly infer from the Words, That whereas it was common among the *Heathens* to assign a more eminent and powerful *Genius* to their *Princes* and *Hero's* than to other *Persons*, our *Saviour* here intimates on the quite contrary, That the *highest* of the *Angels*, (even those that were the most immediate *Attendants* on his *Throne*) were often employ'd by him for the Service and Good of the meanest *Sincere Christian*; And therefore 'twere inexcusable for us to despise those on whom God puts so great a value, and whom the chiefest *Angels* in obedience to his command disdain not to *Minister* unto. O what an astonishing favour is this to be bestow'd upon such inconsiderable Worms as we are! That not only all the *Creatures below us* shou'd be made serviceable to us, but that even the *Glorious Inhabitants* of the *Superior World*, the chief *Favourites* of the *Heavenly King*, the very *Nobles* of his *Royal Court*, shou'd be sent by him as *Ministring Spirits*, to pre-serve

serve us in our dangers, prosper us in our Important Affairs, support and strengthen us in our Conflicts, to rescue us from Temptations, and to promote the great design of our Eternal Salvation. We may well on this occasion say (with the Devout Psalmist) *What is Man, O Lord, that thou art thus mindful of him, or the Son of Man that thou visitest him !* That when he is made lower than the Angels, yet even they should be thus employ'd to minister to him !

O let us then ascribe the Glory hereof unto God. And we need not fear that those *Blessed Spirits* who are so jealous of his honour should take it for any mark of our disrespect to them that we adore him alone on this account. He cou'd as easily promote our Temporal and Eternal Welfare by his own immediate power as by their Ministry. He uses not their services because he needs 'em. But 'tis highly congruous to his Wisdom that he should employ his *Creatures* in Services suited to their Nature and Capacitys, and particularly the higher Rank of 'em in a Ministerial Inspection and Care over the lower. And such an Employment is suitable to the Benignity of their Nature, and gives 'em the desirable

F f occasion

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occasion of expressing thereby their resemblance of him who is infinite *Goodness* and *Love* it self. To him than who is the *Lord* of *Angels* as well as *Men*, must our Religious *Thanksgiving* and *Praise* be rendred for all the benefits and advantages we derive from those kind *Ministrations* he employs 'em in.

III. Let us take care, *That we be such as may justly expect the benefit of their Gracious Ministry.*

For they are chiefly sent to minister for the good of those that are *Heirs of Salvation*. And therefore no wicked Persons can promise to themselves any such favour. Those that are the chosen *Vassals* of *Satan* by becoming the voluntary *Servants* of *Sin*, cannot expect that God shou'd give his *Holy Angels* charge of 'em, or commit 'em to their care. No, They are rather in danger of being entirely abandon'd to the power of those *Infernal Spirits*, whose *Temptations* they are so ready to yield to, and whose *Dictates* they so freely obey. And O miserable is the Case of those *Children of disobedience* in whom that *Prince of the Power of the Air* Rules and Works without controul! Shou'd we see the *Body* of a poor Creature possess'd by an *Infernal Fiend*?
Shou'd

Shou'd we behold him in such a deplorable condition as that of the poor Man's Son we read of—9 *Mark* 18, 22. whom the unclean Spirit *sometimes* cast into the Fire, and *sometimes* into the Water, to destroy him; and so tare him, that he foam'd and gnash'd with his Teeth, and pin'd away? Methinks such a sad Spectacle wou'd move our pity. But alas, The Case of every *hardned Sinner* is altogether as deplorable, whose Soul that unclean Spirit has taken possession of, and whom he hurries so violently to the Commission of those Sins that are far more pernicious and destructive; whom he as it were forces to wound their own Conscience, and makes 'em toyl in the Drugery of Sin for the securing their own Damnation. O let us not then serve those *Infernal Spirits*, if we wou'd not be subjected to 'em. Let us become the faithful *Servants of God*, if we expect that his *Holy Angels* shou'd be employ'd for our Protection and Defence, our Comfort and Welfare. Let us be the sincere *Followers* of our *Blessed Saviour* if we expect that he who is the *Head of Angels* shou'd use their *ministration* for our good.

IV. Let us draw some Encouragement to

our Faith from the Contemplation of the Ministry of the Holy Angels.

When we consider that in our Spiritual Warfare, we wrestle not so much against Flesh and Blood as against Principalities and Powers, and Spiritual Wickednesses in High-Places, (or those wicked Spirits that now inhabit these Airy Regions above us); We are apt to be discourag'd at the view of so formidable Enemys. But we shou'd animate our selves not only by considering the Almighty Power of God himself engag'd for our defence, but also the power of those Instruments he employs for our security. We may argue against our despondent fears, as the Prophet *Elijah* did against those of his Servant, *Fear not, They be more that are with us then those that are with them,* 2 Kings VI. 16. Are those Infernal Feinds numerous? There is also an innumerable Company of Holy Angels. Their Number is said to be *Ten Thousand times Ten Thousand, and Thousand of Thousands,* 5 Rev. 11. And of those Attendants on the Throne of God, 'tis said, *That Thousand Thousands Minister to him, and Ten Thousand times Ten Thousand stand before him,* 7 Dan. 10. Are Devils potent and subtle Creatures? So do Holy Angels excel both in Strength and

Wisdom.

Wisdom. Are Devils industrious in seeking all occasions of entangling us in Sin, and promoting our ruin? And can we think *Holy Angels* less active in their endeavours to counteract their Design, and promote our Obedience and Salvation? For sure those *Infernal Spirits* have no advantage of doing harm above what *Holy Angels* have of doing us good, unless it be what our own corruptions may give 'em. But this cannot be suppos'd the Case of those in whom Divine Grace is the prevalent Principle. Nay, how shou'd it arm us against the fear of *Death* that our Souls will enter into the unseen World under so powerful a Guard and so safe a Convoy!

V. We may hence learn how to demean our selves towards those *Holy Angels* whom the Blessed God employs as *Ministring Spirits* for our good.

1. For sure none can doubt but we ought to entertain a high esteem of 'em, as the most Noble and Glorious Rank of Creatures, in whom the Resemblance of the Divine Perfections dos most brightly shine; We may justly honour 'em as the chief of the Works and Ways of God; Nay, we ought to bear a grateful Affection towards 'em in consideration of

of that *freedom* and *alacrity* with which their compassion and kindness towards us prompts 'em to comply with the Orders and Commands of their Heavenly Sovereign when he *sends 'em to Minister to us*. 'Tis no derogation from the Glory of God to have a *thankful sense* of the *kindness* of our *Earthly Benefactors*, tho' the *praise* of the *Benefits* we receive, *chiefly* belongs to God. And sure 'tis no more injurious to his Honour to *love* those *Blessed Spirits* for all their *Offices of Love* to us. Not that we shou'd address our selves to 'em with any *Forms of Thanksgiving*, which we have no *warrant* for, nor *ground* to believe that they can *bear* and *receive*. But we shou'd retain an *affectionate sense* of the *kindness* that those our *Fellow-Servants* bear to us, who are so unworthy of any *Relation* to 'em and so *undeserving* of that *Ministry* of theirs which the Blessed God dos honour us with.

2. Again, The consideration of their Ministry to us here, *shou'd make us think with Pleasure and Joy of our happy Converse with 'em in the future State*.

We shou'd account it our great privilege and happiness, that *we are come (in Faith and Hope) to that innumerable Company*

Company of Angels, XII Heb. 22. Let us think with the greater Satisfaction and Comfort of those Heavenly Regions where those *Blessed Spirits* will be our joyful *Associates* that are now our *Fellow-Servants*, and vigilant *Guardians*. This *Flesh* is a thick *Veil* that *hides* those excellent Creatures from our view. How desirable then shou'd it be to a purify'd Soul to have its Eyes open'd upon all the *Glories* of the *Invisible World*, and to see and admire the Wonders of Divine Wisdom in the Government thereof, and particularly to entertain a Beneficial Converse with those wise *Sages* of the Heavenly Court.

3. Again, Let us be sensible of the frequent presence of the Holy Angels with us in the whole of our Conversation, and particularly in our *Acts of publick Devotion*. O let us then study to acquit our selves so, that they may be the joyful *Spectators* and *Witnesses* of our *fidelity* and *diligence* in the Service of our common Lord. For they that *rejoyce* in our *Conversion* will no less *rejoyce* in our *Progress* and *Perseverance* in Holiness, and in our *final Salvation*. And even their Eye upon us as well as that of the Blessed God shou'd kindle in us an *Holy Ambition* so to behave

have our selves as may commend us to their Approbation and Applause, as well as to his gracious Acceptance.

Fourthly and Lastly, Let us propose these Ministering Spirits as a Pattern for our Imitation.

We must strive as well as pray, *That the Will of God may be done by us on Earth as it is in Heaven.* We shou'd therefore propose the *Inhabitants of Heaven* as our bright *Exemplars*. And we shou'd endeavour to resemble those Holy Angels, both in general, as they are *Ministering Spirits*, and particularly as they *Minister to the Heirs of Salvation here below.*

As they are in general *Ministering Spirits*.

We shou'd imitate 'em as they *stand always* (in procinctu) ready bent and prepar'd to do the Will of God. They are represented as a *flaming fire*, to denote the *ardour* of their *Zeal* for the *Glor*y of God: And as *full of Wings*, to denote the *celerity* and *speed* with which they execute his *Commands*. With such *servent Zeal*, with such *forward diligence* shou'd we apply our selves to the doing his Holy Will, and executing his just *Commands*. They go not but when and whither they are sent,
so

So shou'd we carefully observe the Orders and Instructions of our Heavenly Sovereign. *They do his Will with delight.* And so shou'd our Hearts be Enlarg'd to run the way of his Commands with all Alacrity.

But we shou'd also imitate Holy Angels.

As they minister to the Heirs of Salvation.

Do the highest Angels themselves not disdain to take care of the meanest member of Christ here below? Do they chearfully come down from Heaven to minister to them on Earth? How far then shou'd we be from a proud Contempt of any, even the meanest of our Fellow Christians! How ready and chearful should we be to stoop to the meanest Offices of Love to promote either their Temporal Welfare, or their Eternal Good. Take heed (saith our Blessed Saviour) *how ye despise one of these little ones, For in Heaven their Angels behold the Face of my Father in Heaven,* — 18 Matt. 10. —

Shall we think those below our Notice and Converse, or undeserving of our beneficent Pity and Love, whom Angels themselves think to be proper objects of their care, and delightfully minister unto? How dos their admirable Benignity and

Goodness, Kindness and Condescension upbraid our Nauseous Self-love and Foolish Pride ! O let us then be as ready as they to protect and defend, to assist and advise, to comfort and support, to succour and relieve the meanest of our fellow-servants, as these Exalted Spirits are ; whose Elevation above us dos no way hinder their Condescending Ministry to us. Especially shou'd Ministers of the Gospel, who are peculiarly Styl'd the *Angels of the Churches* resemble those Excellent Beings, by dividing their Time between beholding the Face of their Father in Heaven, and ministering in the *Heirs of Salvation* on Earth.

VI. We may hence infer *What an honour it is to be a Child of God, and Heir of Salvation.*

How despicable soever such may appear in the Eyes of Men, on the account of the obscurity and meanness of their External Circumstances, they should be honourable in our's. For their Heavenly Father puts such a value on 'em, that he makes his *Holy Angels* themselves *Ministering Spirits* to 'em. They are here their Watchful *Guardians*, and Friendly *Assistants*, and kind *Ministers* and *Comforters*, and they are at death the welcome

come *Messengers* to convey 'em to the Heavenly Court, on whom they may look with the like pleasure as *Jacob* did on the *Waggons* sent to convey him into *Egypt*, 45 *Gen.* 27. And shall those be mean and contemptible in our *Eyes* whom the God of Heaven dignifys with so glorious *Attendants* and *Ministers* ?

FINIS.

of angels
come forth to convey
to the heavenly Court
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be the companions of our first
the God of heaven & earth with angels
and spirits?

21 X 12

SIN
THE
INSTRUMENT
OF THE
Sinners Punishment.

FROM
II *Jerem.* 19.

By J. B.

DUBLIN:

Printed for the use of the Author,
M DCC VIII.

211

INSTITUTION

OF THE

BRITISH MUSEUM



1851

ADJ. B.

D. B. A. M.

Presented for the use of the Institution

1851

A SERMON, &c.

From II Jer. 19 v.

Thy own Wickedness shall correct thee, and thy Back-slidings shall reprove thee. Know therefore and see, That it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts.

A MONG the various Arguments which the Scripture suggests to reclaim Men from their Sinful Courses, There is none methinks shou'd more sensibly affect and touch 'em, than their consideration of the genuine tendency of Sin to make them miserable and wretched. If Sinners have no regard to the Glory of God, yet sure they will have some regard to their own Interest and Welfare; And if as yet they feel not the persuasive Power of Love to God, yet even regular Self-Love shou'd bring 'em under some convictions of their own Folly, when they come to see, that in offending God they are doing the greatest injury to themselves;

themselves; And that their own Sin shall prove its own bitter Punishment. And this Argument my Text gives me just ground to urg and enforce upon 'em.

The Blessed God had at the 13th Verse charg'd the Jews with committing two great Evils, *The forsaking him the Fountain of Living Waters, and the hewing to themselves broken Cisterns that cou'd hold no Water*: i. e. They had revolted from him the true God to the Worship of some Pagan Idol, and thereby changed their glory for that which dos not profit, Verse 11. And what was the consequence and fruit of this, They are told, That for this *Israel became a Servant, and an home-born slave*, &c. 2. Even a Servant to that Nation whose wretched Idols they had chosen to worship and serve. Upon which the Prophet appeals to themselves concerning the equity of this their punishment, *Hast thou not procured this to thy self in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God when he led thee by the way?* Verse 17. Nay, their Sin was the more aggravated, because this Judgment did not reform 'em, but they still rely'd on any other Nations for help rather than on God. And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt to drink the Water of Sihor?

Or

Or what hast thou to do in the way of *Assyria* to drink the Waters of the River? *Sihor* was a River in *Egypt*, and *Euphrates* is here call'd by way of eminency, *The River*. The meaning is, What hast thou to do to make either the *Egyptians* or *Assyrians* thy Refuge, and to fly to them for succour and relief rather than to the God of *Israel* that true Fountain of Living Waters?

Upon this the Prophet denounces this awful Doom from God upon 'em, *Thy own Wickedness shall correct thee, and thy own Back-slidings shall reprove thee, &c.*

In the Text, We have the Sinner's Work, His own Wickedness, His own Back-slidings, His forsaking of God and casting off his Fear. And we have his Wages, Even that Correction and Reproof, That evil and bitter fruit that shall spring from his Sins themselves.

The Subject then which the Words offer to our Meditation is this, viz.

When Men forsake God, and cast off the Fear of him, they shall sooner or later feel the fruits of their own Wickedness to be exceeding evil and bitter, their own Sin shall turn to their Punishment.

Before I enter upon the consideration of this Argument I wou'd only premise.

H h

That

That the Text chiefly speaks of such as go on in a course of *unrepented Wickedness*, in a wilful Defection from God, and from his Service. But yet we may apply it also to the woful *Temporary Back-slidings* of his *Children*, whom he often ules this wise method to reclaim and recover by making 'em know and see in the bitter fruits of it, how evil a thing it was in any degree to depart from him and cast off his Fear. So that the *Correction* or *Punishment* is either *Medicinal* or *Destructive*, accordingly as Men do or do not repent of their *Wickedness*.

But what I wou'd chiefly recommend to your Observation, is, That 'tis not barely mean't, That such as *for-sake God* and *cast off his fear* shall find their *Correction* and *Punishment* for their *Wickedness*, (i. e. on the account of it as the meritorious and procuring cause of their Misery); But they shall find it *in their own Doings*, i. e. Their own *Wickedness* and *Back-slidings* shall be the *Instruments* of their *Correction* and *Punishment*. Their *Wickedness* it self shall be the *Source* of their *Misery*.

And this *Observation* from the Words is parallel to many other *Passages* of *Scripture* that speak to the same purpose.

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Thus when the Prophet *Isaiah* denounces a *Wo* to the *Wicked*, he assigns this reason of it, *Is shall be ill with him, For the Reward of his hands shall be given him.*—3 *Is.* 11. His punishment shall be the *Wages* that he himself has taken pains for, and as it were pull'd with his own hands upon his own Head. So when *Solomon* describes that penal *Misery* and *Ruine* which all those wou'd bring upon themselves, who *bated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord, who wou'd have none of his Counsel, but despised all his Reproof,* he dos it in those remarkable Expressions, *That they shou'd eat the Fruit of their own Way, and be fill'd with their own Devices,* 1 *Prov.* 30, 31. What is particularly said of the malicious Man may be applied often to other Sinners, *That while they Travel with Iniquity, and Conceive Mischief, They fall into the Pit which themselves have made,* 7 *Psf.* 14, 15. Or (as the *Psalmist* elsewhere speaks of the *Wicked* in general) *They are snared in the Work of their own Hands,* 9 *Psf.* 15. I shall only add Two observable Passages more, The one is, What *God* speaks to *Cain* upon the Murther of his innocent Brother, *If thou do not well, Sin or Punishment lies at the Door,* 4 *Gen.* 7. The o-

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ther is, What *Moses* speaks to the *Israelites*, If you do not so, Behold ye have sinn'd against the Lord, and be sure your Sin will find you out, 32 Numb. 22. And 'tis no impertinent Observation of a pious Divine, upon the comparing those two Passages, That in the former Sin is compar'd to a *Mastiff* that lies behind the Door ready to fly upon any that open it. But in the latter, 'tis compar'd to a *Blood-Hound* that traces the Sinner in his Foot-steps, and never leaves the Scent and Track till at last it find him out and seize upon him.

You see then the Observation drawn from this Text receives Light and Confirmation from other Passages of Scripture that speak to the same purpose.

What I shall therefore chiefly offer to your Consideration from these Words, is to illustrate the Truth of this Observation, by shewing you in particular, What *evil* and *bitter fruits* such as forsake God do usually reap from their own Sins, How their own *Wickedness* dos correct 'em, and their own *Back-slidings* reprove 'em, How their Sin turns to their Punishment.

And here I must distinctly consider the *evil* and *bitter fruits* of Men's *Wickedness* in this Life, and then the more Intolerable Fruits of their impenitent continuance therein in the Life to come. First,

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First, Let us consider the *evil* and *bitter fruits* which the *Wickedness* of Men does usually produce in *this Life*, when they forsake God and cast off his Fear.

And here we may consider these *bitter fruits* of Sin as springing, partly from the *Nature* and *Tendency* of Sin it self, From the *Workings* of *Conscience* in the *Review* of it, From the wise and just *Conduct* of *Divine Providence* towards the Sinner, and from the *Tempter's Malice* and *Subtily*.

I. We may here consider the *evil* and *bitter fruits* that spring from the *Nature* and *Tendency* of Sin it self.

And among those *evil fruits*, I may justly reckon such as these, The *hardship* and *slavery* that the Sinner is expos'd to in the prosecution of his *Wickedness* and Sin, The *Disappointment* he usually meets with in the Commission of it, The *Shame* that attends the Discovery, and the *woeful Difficulty* of making a *Retreat*.

1. One wretched *fruit* of Men's *wickedness*, is the *hardship* and *slavery* they often undergo in the prosecution of their *Sinful Course*.

And O what a *shameful* and *ignominious*, what a *painful* and *miserable* *Vassalage* and *Drudgery* do the *Lusts* of Men usually put 'em

236 Sin the Instrument of

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And O what a *shameful* and *ignominious*, what a *painful* and *miserable* Vassalage and *Drudgery* do the *Lusts* of Men usually put 'em

'em upon ! How is the wretched Sinner at the beck and command of every brutish Appetite, every vile and hateful Passion ! How dos he tug at the Oar of Sin, and *toy* for his own *Damnation* ! What hateful Dissimulation, What servile Flattery, what tedious Attendance, what vile Cringing must the *Ambitious* use to Insinuate themselves into the Favour of those on whom their Hopes of Preferment depend ! What restless Projects and Incessant Toyls dos the *Covetous Worldling* use, How dos he *Rise early and Sit up late, and eat the Bread of Carefulness*, And what base Arts, what mean and sordid things dos his Insatiable desire of Riches usually put him upon ! Nay often, How little dos he himself enjoy of what he has thus drudg'd the greatest part of his Life to board up for he knows not whom ! How often is he *Poor* in the midst of *Plenty* ! *Starving* his *Belly* and pinching his *Back* to feed his Insatiable *Eye* ! Having wealth indeed in his *Chests* but no *Heart* or *Power* to use it ! And for the *Unclean Wretch*, What hazards and Difficultys dos he run thro' What base and shameful Contrivances dos he use to compass his vile Designs ! So that if Sinners did but consider, What odious and Scandalous,
what

what painful and difficult, and tedious Servitude their Lusts put 'em upon. Methinks their Hearts shou'd rise up in just Derefestation and Abhorrence of it, And shou'd be ready to say, " I disdain
" henceforth to be so miserable a Slave
" to so Imperious Task-Masters, and
" will be employ'd no longer in so Ignominious and Intolerable Drudgery.

Again,

2. Another Evil and bitter *Fruit* of Men's Wickedness is the *Disappointment* they usually meet with in the *Commission* of it.

And alas, How far is Sin from Answering those large Expectations the Sinners Entertains of Satisfaction in the Gratification of his corrupt Inclinations and desires ! How usually dos he find nothing but *Vanity and Vexation* in what he propos'd to himself all Imaginable *Pleasure and Delight* ! We have a lively Instance of this in the *Case* of Foolish *Amnon*. What *Torment* did his Incestuous Lust towards his Sister *Tamar* expose him to ! The Text tells us, *He was so vexed that he fell sick for her, because he thought it hard for him to do any thing to her.*—2 Sam. 13. 2. —But when in Pursuance of *Jonadab's* wicked

wicked Advice, he did by Stratagem gain his point, and offer'd Violence to her, What Satisfaction did he find in so vile an *Action*? The Text tells us, *That he hated her exceedingly, so that the Hatred wherewith he hated her was greater then the Love wherewith he loved her, and he said to her, Arise, and be gone, Verse 15.* His proposed Pleasure was soon turn'd into Vexation, and the imaginary sweet of Sin prov'd only Wormwood and Gall. Some Sins carry their own Torment along with 'em. So dos that Malice and Hatred, That Envy and Rancour that prey upon the Breast that entertains 'em. So dos that Pride that renders even appearance of slight and disrespect so grievous and intolerable. As we see in the Case of *Haman* to whom all Honours heap'd upon him in the Court of *Ahasuerus* avail'd nothing, so long as *Mordecai* refus'd to bow the Knee to him, 5 *Esther* 13. And sure I need not tell you; How little real pleasure the Glutton or Drunkard finds in overloading Nature with Nauseous Excess. And how just a Correction of his Folly those painful Diseases are which his Intemperance so often exposes him to. Not to mention that *consumption* and *ruin* that this expensive

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five Vice so often brings upon his *Substance and Estate.*

Again,

3. Another evil and bitter fruit of Men's Wickedness is the *Shame* that usually attends the Discovery of it.

And this indeed dos chiefly refer to those Sins which they are studious to conceal from the View of others. How restless and dilquieting Thoughts dos the very fear of a *detection* usually expose 'em to ! And what confounding *Shame* dos usually cover 'em, when their hidden *works of Darkness* are brought to open *Light* ! If innocent *Tamar* that suffer'd the violence cou'd say, *And I whither shall I cause my Shame to go ?* How much more may we say to the guilty Sinner in the Language of the Apostle, *What fruit hadst thou in those things whereof thou art now asham'd ?* 6 *Rom.* 22. 'Tis a just Observation, That Men's secret Sins owe 'em a *Shame*, and will usually (at least without *Repentance*) some time or other pay it. What they studiously *cover* shall be some way or other *reveal'd*, what they industriously *bide* shall to their confusion be *made known*, 10 *Mat.* 26. They will find the Truth of the Wise Man's
I Assertion,

Assertion, *He that covers his Sins shall not prosper ; But he that confesses and forsakes 'em shall find mercy, 28 Prov. 13.* And sure, If the Sinner wou'd but put the *Reproach* and *Disgrace* that attends the *Discovery* of Sin in the one Scale, and the imaginary *pleasure* of it in the other, he wou'd soon find that the *latter* is far outweigh'd by the *former*. And what *Solomon* speaks in reference to one particular Sin, (*viz.* That of *Uncleanness*) may be apply'd to all other hainous and hateful Crimes that the Sinner ventures upon when he casts off the fear of God, *A Wound and dishonour shall they get, and their reproach shall not be wip'd away, 6 Prov. 33.*

4. Another evil *Fruit* of Sin is the *Extreme Difficulty of making a Retreat.*

The *Way* of Sin is indeed *broad*, and the *Entrance* upon it exceeding *easy*. But we may truly say of it (as it was said of the *Lyons-Den*) *vestigia pauca retrorsum* ; There are comparatively few that have made an happy *Escape*. Alas, little dos the Sinner consider how far he dos by yielding to one *Temptation* strengthen his corrupt *Inclinations*, rivet his vitious habits, and put himself into the power of the Tempter, who neglects

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lects no Advantages for Establishing his own Dominion and Interest in his Heart! We read of the Wicked, *That his own Iniquities shall take him, and he shall be snared in the Work of his own hands,* 5 *Prov.* 22. The Sinner seems to be describ'd here as one that after he has yielded to Temptation and run into Sin, wou'd now make a *recess* and *return* to his Duty; But alas, he finds himself *held in Cords*, so that when he wou'd (as one speaks) unwind the Skein of his former Life, he runs but more into the Entanglemen the has made with his own Hands. Satan and Sin have got a strong hold of him, and he finds it harder than ever to wrest himself out of their Power. His Corruptions become more rooted and inveterate, and the Resistance of Conscience is weakned; so that his *Recovery* is more *hopeless*, and almost *desperate*.

Thus is *Sin* it's own *Punishment* by the *natural tendency* of it to produce such *evil* and *bitter fruits* as these.

But,

II. We may farther take Notice of the *bitter* and *evil fruits* of Sin in the *Workings of Natural Conscience* upon the *review* of it.

Wickedness may indeed be (as *Zophar* speaks,—20 *Job* 12, &c). *sweet in the Mouth*, and the Sinner may *hide it under his Tongue*, But this *Meat will be turned in his Bowels*, and prove as the *Gall of Asps within him* (i. e. a bitter and deadly Poyson) *Conscience* has such Notices not only of the *Being of God*, but of *Moral Good or Evil*, and of the *Rewards and Punishments* thereof, that in the very *Heathens* themselves 'tis said to *accuse or excuse*, II *Rom.* 15. And much more will it do so where 'tis more fully enlightened from the Word of God. And therefore the Sinner can never hope to escape the *Reproaches and Censures* of his own awakened *Conscience*. He carries at once, a *Witness*, a *Judge*, and a *Tormentor* in his own Bosom. The *pleasure of Sin* is indeed soon over, but the *sting* of it remains; And the *Wounds* it has given to *Conscience* will on every serious Reflection *bleed afresh*. The Sinner sows those *Seeds* in his own Mind by every wilful Sin that will sooner or later spring up in *anguish and remorse*, in guilty *horrors and fears*. We read in *Ezra* of a Decree of King *Darius*, That *whoever should alter it, Timber should be pull'd down from his own House, and being set up he shou'd be hang'd thereon*, 6 *Ezra* 11.

So

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So is it the just Decree of *Heaven*, That for every wilful Transgressor of his Law, *Materials* shou'd be drawn from his own *Conscience*, like *Timber* from his own *House*, for his *Execution* and *Punishment*. And there is no such *Gibbet* or *Rack* as a Man's own *guilty Conscience*.

But of this more will occur when I come to consider the *bitter fruits* of *Sin* in the *other World*.

But farther,

III. We may consider the *bitter fruits* of *Sin* as they spring from the *wise and just conduct* of *Divine Providence* towards the *Sinner*.

I have already suggested, that some *Sins* tend in their own *Nature* to make us *miserable* here. Such as *Malice*, *Envy*, *Pride*, &c.

And I wou'd now add, That the *Providence* of *God* dos often wonderfully concur to make the *Sinner* feel the wretched and pernicious *Effects* of his own *Folly*. Thus we read of the *young Prodigal* that he quickly *spent his Substance* in *riotous Living*, and thereby reduc'd himself to *beggary* and *want*. But the *Providence* of *God* concurr'd to make *his own Wickedness* correct him, when at the *same Time*, *there arose a mighty Famine* in *that*

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that Land, that increas'd his necessities and rendered 'em the more pinching and grievous. So *Absalom* took a *Pride* in his *Beauty*, and particularly in his *long Hair*. And *Providence* so orders it, that in his *Rebellion* against his Father, when he had lost the Day, this *Hair* in his Flight catches on the *Bough of a Tree*, where *Joab* found and slew him. As *Earthly Judges* often order Offenders to be Executed in the very *Place* where their *Crimes* were committed, so the just *Providence* of *God* so disposes matters, That either as to the *kind* or *measure*, or the *Time* and *Place*, the *Punishment* shou'd bear a *correspondence* to the *Sin*, and remarkably appear to be the *fruit* of it. As *Joseph's* Brethren were no sooner reduc'd into extreme distreis by their being thrown into Prison, and ordered to bring their youngest Brother as the only condition of their Release, but they sensibly own it as the fruit of their own Sin, in their refusing to hear their Brother *Joseph*, when he besought 'em, and when they saw the *Anguish* of his Soul, 42 Gen. 21.

Once more,

IV. We may consider the *evil* and *bitter fruits* of Sin, as they spring from the *Malice* and *Subtlety* of the *Tempter*.

For

For 'tis our own corrupt Inclinations that render us so easie a Prey to that great Destroyer of Souls. 'Tis our Eagerness after his specious Baits that makes us so readily swallow the fatal Hook that is under 'em. One well compares this World to a Decoy-pool. Satan is the Keeper of the Pool, The Vanities of this World are the Decoys that inveigle and draw such Shoals of Sinners after 'em. But when they think to enjoy 'em, These Vanities like the Decoys all dive away and are gone, and Satan drawing his Net they are all taken. So that as the Fishes that are taken in an evil Net or as the Birds that are caught in the Snare, so are the Sons of Men snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon 'em, 9 Eccl. 11. 'Tis our own Lusts betray us into the hands of that great Enemy and Destroyer of Souls. 'Tis thro' their strength and prevalency as well as his Sagacity to suit his alluring Temptations to 'em, that we are taken Captive by him at his pleasure. And herein also our Sin turns to our Punishment.

By all these ways dos Mens own Wick-
edness correct and their own Back-slidings
reprove 'em. Thus do they often here
know, and see, and feel, what an evil and bit-
ter thing it is that they have forsaken the
Lord

Lord their God, and that his fear was not in 'em.

But,

Secondly, Let us consider for the Illustration of this Truth the intollerably bitter fruits of Sin in the Life to come, and it will appear, That *their own Wickedness* does correct and their own Back-slidings reprove 'em, and their Punishment is the genuine Result and Fruit of their own Impenitency.

And here I shall not insist on that Connexion between *Wickedness* and endless misery that is made by the tenour of the Righteous Threatnings of God; which do subject all *impenitent Sinners* to everlasting Punishment. For I shall only consider, how far that Punishment is the Natural Result and Fruit of their own Wickedness.

And to clear the Truth of this Observation in reference to the endless Punishment of Sinners in the other World, we may consider it as distinguish'd into Punishment of Loss, and Punishment of Sense, or into privative and positive Punishment.

I. As to *privative Punishment* that consists in the Loss of the Heavenly Happiness and Glory, This is the genuine Result and Fruit of Men's obstinate Wickedness.

For by such incorrigible Wickedness the

the Sinner dos render himself *morally incapable* of that *Heavenly Felicity*, and puts an insuperable *Bar* in the way of his Enjoying it. Such is the vile and debased and malignant Temper of an impenitent Sinner that he wou'd be but *miserable* tho' furrounded with all the *Objects of Happiness*; And those *Mansions of Glory* wou'd be to him the *Place of Torment*. Alas, What pleasure cou'd an *Unsanctify'd Soul* find in the *Presence and Communion* of that God to whom it bears no resemblance, whose *Holiness* it hates, whose *Justice* it trembles at the Thoughts of, and in whose sight 'tis most hateful and abominable! What other Doom can he who has here said to God, *Depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of thy ways,* expect from him but that, *Depart from me thou cursed for ever?* XXI *Job* 14 compared with XXV *Mat.* 41.

What satisfaction can such an *impure Sinner* take in the *Society and Converse* of those *Glorify'd Saints*, to whose spotless Nature he bears no Conformity, whose *Heavenly Imployment and Exercise* is no way agreeable to his *Carnal Inclinations*, and whose *Spiritual and Divine Joys* he has no *Palate to Relish and Taste*? Alsoon may a *Swine* that is us'd to the *Mire and*

Drass relish the Entertainments of an Earthly Palace, as a Brutify'd Sinner take delight in the Converse and Entertainments of the Heavenly Community and Kingdom. Those Spiritual and Divine Objects are no way suited to his sordid and terrene, his corrupt and vitious Inclinations.

Now this irreparable *Loss of Heaven*, is what the Sinner's own Folly exposes him to. 'Tis he incapacitates his own Soul for that Eternal Glory. 'Tis he that fixes that *unpassable gulf* that for ever separates and excludes him from the *Regions of the Blessed*.

Nay farther,

II. As to the *positive Part of the Punishment of* Impenitent Sinners in the other World, 'Tis also in a great measure the *genuine fruit of their own Wickedness*.

There are Three Ingredients of the *Punishment of Sense* that we may now conceive of, and they are all the genuine *product and fruit of the Sinner's own Wickedness*.

For that *Weeping and Wailing and Gnashing of Teeth*, which Sinners will then be abandon'd to, when they see themselves *thrust out of the Kingdom of God*, this will Naturally arise from the Reflections of an

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an Enraged Conscience on their wretched folly, who have *Sold their Heavenly Birth-Right for a Morsel of Meat*, and Barter'd away the hopes of that unconceivable Felicity for contemptible Trifles. They will have none to blame for that irreparable Loss but themselves, and the Edge of Conscience in its cutting Reflections on it will be wholly turn'd upon themselves.

And for that part of the Punishment of the Damned which will arise from the *Accusations and Stings of their own guilty Consciences*, 'tis evident, that they bring this upon themselves.

'Tis they that have furnish'd an accusing Conscience with such a heavy Indictment and Charge. 'Tis they that have Arm'd it against themselves. 'Tis they that by the innumerable Offences of an Ungodly Life, have been sowing those Seeds that will then spring up in Everlasting Anguish and Shame, Horror and Despair. 'Tis their past Iniquities that supply *Food to the Worm that never dyes, and Fuel to the Fire that shall never be quench'd*, IX Mark 46, 48.

And for that part of their Punishment which arises from their *impetuous Carnal Desires after those Earthly Enjoyments* which

they are now for ever dispossest'd of, 'tis as manifest that this part of their Torment is the fruit of their own Wickedness. 'Tis they have kindled and cherished those impure Flames in which they are now Tormented, without *one Drop of Water to cool their Tongue*. 'Tis they have debas'd their Affections, and suffer'd 'em to be so inordinately enamour'd on this vain World, that the Loss of it now appears so intolerable to 'em. They cou'd not but foresee that *the Form and Fashion of this World was passing away*, and were on that account warn'd against the inordinate Love of it, and therefore can thank none but themselves that they are now miserable by insatiable Desires after what they are never like to enjoy.

Nay, 'tis the Conformity of their malignant Disposition to that of accursed Feinds that fits 'em to be their Associates in the Regions of Darkness and Despair.

On all these Accounts it appears, that even in reference to the Endless Punishment of Sinners in the other World, *Their own Wickedness corrects 'em*, and they feel in these genuine fruits thereof what *an evil and bitter thing it is, that they have forsaken the Lord their God, and that his fear was not in 'em*.

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It now remains, That we apply this practical Subject,

And,

I. We may hence see, and vindicate, and admire the *Wisdom and Justice of God in the Punishment of Sin.*

'Tis one great Instance of his admirable *Wisdom* that he has so constituted the *Nature* of Man as to Establish an inseparable Connexion between *Holiness* and *Happiness*, between *Wickedness* and *Misery*. *Holiness* is that to the Soul that *Health* is to the Body, the Foundation and Spring of all inward Peace and Comfort. *Wickedness* is its *Disease*, usually painful and (if *Repentance* prevent not) mortal and pernicious. The Great GOD has so contriv'd the Frame of his Moral Government that we cannot affront him without doing the greatest injury to our selves, and by every wilful provocation of him we sow the *Seeds* of *Shame* and *fear*, *disquiet* and *Terror* in our own Minds.

Nay, this Consideration offers the clearest Ground for vindicating the *Justice* of God in the *Eternal Punishment* of the *Damned*. I shall not exclude such Arguments as are drawn from the *infinite Majesty of God that is affronted by Sin*,

Sin, from that *Everlasting Punishment* being the Sinner's own *Option* and *Choice*, From the *necessity* of such a Punishment being threatned in order to deter Men from Sin, from the Inclination of Impenitent Sinners to persist in their Sins for ever, &c. But this seems to be the most solid Argument, and that which renders the *Justice* of God most unexceptionable, That to *Immortal Souls* this *Everlasting Punishment* is the *Natural Result* and *Fruit* of their own *Wickedness*; That *Wickedness* rendring 'em *incapable* of the *Heavenly Felicity*, and sowing the *Seeds* of all that positive *Misery* and *Torment* which they suffer. And what Blemish or Stain can it be on the *Justice* of God to leave the incorrigible Sinner to the *Natural Effects* of his own *perverseness* and folly, and to suffer him to eat *the fruit of his own Doings*? How equal is it that Sinners *reap* what themselves have *sown*, and shou'd *inherit* that *Destruction* which they have with violent hands *pull'd down upon themselves*? And how unreasonable were it to expect that God shou'd extinguish the Life of those Souls that were design'd for an endless Duration, merely to prevent the Misery they have wilfully plung'd themselves into?

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II. We may hence farther infer, that 'tis a most dreadful Judgment for a Man to be left to his *own Wickedness* and his *own Back-slidings*.

For there needs no more to render him for ever miserable. That *Wickedness* will sooner or later *correct him*, and those *Back-slidings* will *reprove him*, He will sooner or later feel the *fruits* of 'em to be exceedingly *evil* and *bitter*. 'Tis an awful Sentence when God saith of a Sinner, as he once did of Ephraim, *He is joyn'd to Idols, let him alone*, IV Hos. 17. When he gives 'em up to the *Lusts* of their *own Hearts*, and saith of 'em, *Let the Unrighteous be Unrighteous still, and the Filthy be Filthy still*, 22 Rev. 11. And O what need have we to pray that God wou'd deliver us from *our selves*, and from the *Natural Effects* of our own *Sin* and *Folly*!

III. We may hence see, *How little reason we have to envy the present Prosperity of Sinners*.

Alas, their own *Wickedness* is their *Plague*, and carries its *punishment* as it were in its own *Bowels*. We see indeed their *External flourishing Condition*, We hear the *Noise* of their *Carnal Jolity* and *Mirth*, but we discern not their *inward Terrors* and *Fears*, much less

lets do we discern that *Everlasting Anguish and Despair* which they are sowing the *Seeds of*, that *Wrath* which after their *hard and impenitent Heart* they are *treasuring up against the Day of Wrath and the Revelation of the Righteous Judgement of God*. 'Tis observed, That the *Romans* in their *Solemn Triumphs* after a *Victory* were wont to bring out the *Captives* they triumph'd over in all their most splendid *Attire and Ornaments*, and led 'em in that *Pomp to Execution*. One that understood nothing of the *Design* might think those the most *admired and happy Persons* in all the *Company*, whereas indeed they were the most *wretched*, being thus *adorn'd* only in *scorn* for an *ignominious Death*. So do we often in our *Ignorance* look upon prosperous *Sinners* when surrounded with *Earthly Honours and Riches* as the most *happy Persons*, whereas did we Judge a right of things, we shou'd see that they are far more proper *Objects* of our *Pity* then our *Envy*; They are but as *Beasts fatted for the Day of Slaughter*, and as *Malefactors led out in Pomp to Execution*.

IV. We may hence see, *How impossible it is that impenitent Sinners shou'd go unpunish'd.* Alas,

Alas, they are by their manifold Transgressions laying the certain *Foundation* of their own *Misery*. They are industrious in sowing the Seeds from whence a sad Harvest of Anguish and Misery will spring. They are often busily imploy'd to undo themselves here, but especially laborious in securing their own endless perdition. They are taking great pains to Arm an Enraged Conscience with bitter and furious Stings. They are like poor distracted Creatures that are gashing and wounding themselves, tho' perhaps they at present feel it not. But in due time, *Their Wickedness shall correct 'em, and their Back-slidings reprove 'em,* and they shall to their cost see and know, that 'tis an evil and bitter thing that they have forsaken the Lord their God and that his fear was not in 'em. They will feel Sin to be the Gall of Bitterness it self whenever Conscience is by some terrible Calamity startled and alarm'd, whenever Death and Judgment are in their view, or at least whenever they come to reap the miserable Fruits of it in the World to come. O with what Horrour and Anguish will they then look back on those Momentany Pleasures of Sin for which they have Barter'd away the hopes of E-

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ternal Glory ! With what Amazement and Consternation will they look forward on that State of remediless Darkness and Despair that is before 'em ! In which there is no *Glimpse* of *Light* and *Hope*, Nothing to expect but the *Gnawings* of the *Worm that never dyes*, and the *rage* of the *unquenchable Fire* !

And that which will greatly aggravate their Misery, is, That 'tis *self procur'd*, 'tis the Natural Result of their own Wickedness. This their Destruction is *from themselves*. Divine Justice has little more to do then to leave 'em to the woful Effects of their own wilful Departure from him.

V. Let me therefore hence urge Sinners to entertain such just apprehensions of the miserable tendency of their own wickedness, as may excite 'em to abhor and renounce it.

One wou'd think 'twere an easy matter to dissuade a Man from doing an apparent Mischief to himself. But O that we cou'd prevail with deluded Sinners to forbear the doing the greatest and most durable Injury to their own Souls. To this purpose I wou'd urg 'em to reflect upon their *past Iniquities*, and to consider what *Advantage* and *Benefit*, What solid *pleasure* or *profit* they have reap'd

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reap'd from 'em? What have you ever got by Sin that can any way counter-vail the miserable consequences and fruits of it? What have you got worth the Toyl of Prosecution, answerable to your Expectation? What that will compensate for all the fear of *Shame* from Men or of *Vengeance* from God? What that will make amends for all the Challenges and Rebukes of an Accusing Conscience? What that will compensate for the Lots of Eternal Glory, or support you under the horrors of Everlasting Despair! Alas, What is the Momentary *sweet* of Sin when roll'd in the Mouth, when it will prove in the Belly as the Gall of *Asps* for ever? And who wou'd continue a perverse *Enemy* to God, when all he shall get by it is to be the worst *Enemy* imaginable to himself? Who wou'd tug at the Oar of Sin, when he is all the while toying for his own *Misery* and *Damnation*? Who wou'd gratify the Tempter's *Malice* and his own *Lusts* at the Expence of his own *Eternal Ruin*? There is a Passage mention'd that happen'd in the Time of *Galienus* the Roman Emperor. The mutinous Soldiers set up several *Competitors* with him. Among the rest one *Marius* that was a common Soldier,

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and had been a *Sword-Cutler* by Trade; But within three days they Mutiny'd again, and one of the Soldiers drawing his *Sword* to strike him, cry'd out, "*Here Marius, This is with the Sword which thy self hast made.* So may *Satan* upbraid us when he is made the *Executioner* of God's Vengeance against us, That he smites us with the *Sword* which we our selves have made, our own *Sins* being the *Instruments* of our *Torment* and *Ruin*.

O let us then learn to entertain a just Detestation of Sin. Let us regard it as the just *Spring* of all our *Penal Evils*. Let the lively Conviction of it's wretched fruits embitter it to us, and divorce our affections from it. Let us be as unwilling knowingly to venture upon it, even when cover'd with the most specious Bait as to drink of that *delicious Cup* into which we know that a *deadly Poyson* is infus'd.

VI. Let me hence caution the *Children of God* against any wilful *Relapses* into Sin.

If ever you have felt the *Pangs* of the *New-Birth*, you have in some measure known and felt how evil and bitter a thing Sin is. And sure you shou'd be
afraid

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afraid of hugging that *Serpent* again whose painful and poysonous *Stings* you have felt before. And know, That if *the Cords of Divine Love* do not draw you to your Duty, if more *ingenuous Arguments* will not engage you to constancy in it, a just God will in the wise methods of his Providence make your own *Sin correct*, and your own *Back-slidings* reprove you. You shall know and see by sad Experience how *evil and bitter a thing it is to forsake him and cast off his Fear*. He has many ways to do it. He may expose your Follies to your publick shame and reproach. He may abandon you to your own uncomfortable Darkness and and Fears when you have eclips'd the Light of his Countenance. He may turn your Iniquities into *Twigs* and make of them a *Smarting Rod* to chastize you. O then take Care to prevent the the Severity of his Fatherly Discipline by a cautious fear and dread of every known and presumptuous Sin. Beware of any wilful Transgression, lest your indulged Iniquity shou'd sooner or later to your bitter cost find you out. Remember that *Innocence* is as much preferable even to *true Repentance* as *continued Health* is to a *dangerous Disease* and a *painful Cure*.

FINIS.

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CONCERNING
OFFENCES
OR
SCANDALS.
FROM
XVIII *Mat.* 7 Verse.

Sermon First.

By J. B.

D U B L I N:

Printed for the use of the Author,
M DCC VIII.

CONCERNING
OFFENCES
OR
SCANDALS
FROM



R. J. B.

DUBLIN:

Printed for the use of the Author.
MDCCLXIII.

A SERMON, &c.

XVIII *Matth. 7 v.*

*Wo to the World because of Offences ; For
it must needs be that Offences come ,
But Wo to that Man by whom the Of-
fence cometh.*

Σκα'ρδ'αλα

TO Clear the Occasion and Scope
of this remarkable Passage we
must look back as far as the beginning
of this Chapter. We find there our
Lord's Disciples accosting him with this
Question, *Who is greatest in the Kingdom
of Heaven ? i. e. Who shall have the
highest Preferment and Dignity in the Mes-
siah's Kingdom ?* Our Lord to rebuke this
their *Ambition and Pride* that made 'em
affect such External Dignity and Prehe-
minence as they fancy'd the Messiah
wou'd advance his Followers to, sets a
Child before 'em as an Emblem and Pat-
tern of *Humility* ; And plainly tells 'em,
That a *Resemblance to Children in Humili-
ty* was anecessary *Qualification* of all that
M m shou'd

shou'd be admitted to the priviledges of
 his Kingdom ; And the more exemplary
 any one is for *humility*, the greater he
 shou'd be there. And upon this occasion
 he tells 'em, *That whosoever shou'd receive*
such a little Child (even one of the mean-
 est of his *Disciples*) *in his Name*, would
 be construed as *Receiving him*. Whereas
whosoever shou'd offend or scandalize one
of those little ones that believ'd in him,
 'twere better that a Mill-stone was hang'd
 about his Neck, and he were drown'd in the
 Sea. i. e. Our Lord will Interpret our
 our *Cordial Respect and Kindness* in *Re-*
ceiving the least of his *Disciples* as such,
 as a Mark of our Sincere Respect and
 Affection to *himself*. Whereas if any
 Man shall thro' his proud contempt of
 'em, or haughty carriage towards 'em,
 or any other way be the guilty Cause of
 their *Stumbling and Fall*, It were bet-
 ter that he himself were Sunk into the
 Sea with a Mill-stone about his Neck.
 The Words allude to a *Punishment* which
 was not only us'd among the *Greeks*,
 and sometimes among the *Romans*, but
 (as a Learned Author, Dr. Allix, shows)
 The *Jews* sometimes did (*ἡ ἀνάστυλα ἐν*
Μαρε Σοδόμα dejicere lapide annexo) cast
 execrable Persons into the dead Sea with a
 Stone

Stone ty'd to 'em. So dangerous a thing our Lord intimates it wou'd be, for any Man to cause the *Stumbling* and *Fall* of the *meanest* of his *Discip'les*. And upon this occasion he adds these Words, *Wo to the World because of Offences, &c.*

In order to our clearing the sense of this Passage, we must a little Enquire what our Lord intends by *Offences* or *Scandals*? (For 'tis in the Original *Σκάνδαλα*).

Answer. By *Offences* or *Scandals*, we must by no means understand, every *Word* or *Action*, or *Omission* of ours that may be *displeasing* to others, and particularly to *weak Christians*; Because they may thro' their culpable Ignorance be *displeas'd* or *offended* with us for doing what is our important and necessary *Duty*. As we know the *Judaizing* were thus *offended* with the *Gentile-Christians* for their not observing the *Rites of the Mo-saick Law*, in opposition whereto it was the real *Duty* of those *Gentile-Christians* to stand fast in their *Christian Liberty*. See 5 *Gal. 1.*

An *Offence* or *Scandal* dos in the Language of Scripture properly signify, a *Stumbling-block*, or occasion of falling to others.

Not that every *Word* or *Action* of ours

which others may unreasonably and perversly *misconstrue*, and turn into an *Occasion* or *Temptation* to falling thro' such groundless misinterpretation of it, is such an *Offence* or *Scandal* as our Lord here speaks of. This is what we call *Scandal Taken*, but not *Given*. Thus our Lord's *Cross* or ignominious *Sufferings* were a *Scandal* or *Stumbling-Block* to the *Jews*, and a sad *Occasion* of their *Unbelief*. But this was wholly thro' their default, and therefore only a *Scandal Taken*, not *Given*. Whereas the *Scandal* in the Text, must be something *said* or *done* or *omitted* by us, that has a *Plain* and *Natural* and *Sinful* Tendency to *occasion* the *Stumbling* and *Fall* of others; So that if they do *Stumble* and *Fall*, we are in part the *Guilty Causes* of it by having set such a dangerous *Snare* and *Temptation* in their way. Nay the *Scandal* may be *given* by us, and we chargeable with it, when 'tis not *Taken* by others, nor their *fall* occasion'd by it. As *Peter* by his *Advice* to our Lord against exposing himself to the sufferings he foretold he must undergo, did set such a *Stumbling-Block* in his way, tho' his *Advice* was *rejected*. And upon his giving him the *Advice*, our Lord tells him, *Thou art an Offence (or Scandal)* to me.

me, 16 *Matth. 23. i. e.* Thou wouldest by thy carnal Advice tending to divert me from the Prosecution of my great Design for the Redemption of Sinners, lay a dangerous *Stumbling-Block* in my way. But the Case is the worse, when the Scandal is both *Given* and *Taken*, i. e. When we both lay the *Occasion* of *Falling* in the way of others, and they do actually *Stumble* and *Fall*. For we are in that case chargeable with their guilt, having been very Sinfully accessory to it. And therefore our Lord here denounces a solemn *Woe* against *such, by whom the Offence (or Scandal) comes*, and a *Woe to the World because of 'em*. It being our great Sin if we lay such a *Stumbling-Block* in the way of others, and the misery of the *World*, that so many are in danger of *falling* thereby.

An *Offence* or *Scandal* is then some *Word* or *Action* or *Omission* of ours, known to others, that has a *Natural* and *Sinful Tendency* to occasion their *Fall*.

When I say to occasion their *Fall*, I mean either their *Fall* into open *Infidelity* in opposition to the *Christian Faith*, or into open *Irreligion* and *Wickedness*, in opposition to the *Holiness* which the Gospel requires, or their *Fall* into some particular *Error* or *Sin* in opposition to the *Purity* of *Christian Faith* or *Practice*.

The

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The *Offence* or *Scandal* which is most frequently mention'd in the *New-Testament*, and which the Text it self has a principal reference to, is such a *Stumbling-Block* lay'd by us in the way of others, as tends either to hinder 'em from *Receiving* or *obeying* the Gospel, or to make 'em fall from that *Faith* and *Obedience* they have once profess'd. And Men are then especially said to be *Scandaliz'd*, when such a *Stumbling-Block* and *Temptation* which is sinfully laid by others in their way dos occasion their *Rejecting Christianity*, or their *Apostacy* from it after a former profession of it; and that either by *making Ship-wreck of the Faith*, or *Putting away a good Conscience*, or *both*.

Thus our Lord, saith, *Mat. 11. 6. Blessed is he that is not Offended (or Scandaliz'd) in me, i. e. Is not hindred from Receiving me and my Gospel, by taking any occasion of distast at my Person, or Doctrine, or the Circumstances of my Life or Death, &c.* So we read of those *Hearers* compar'd to the *stony ground*, that are said to believe for a while, that when *Persecution* for the word ariseth, by and by they are *Offended (or Scandaliz'd)* 23 *Mat. 24. i. e. Tempted hereby to fall from their Christian Profession by this dangerous Stumbling-*

Stumbling-Block of *Sufferings* lay'd in their way. So the *Pharisees* are often said to be *Scandaliz'd* at our Lord, 15 *Mat.* 12. 7 *Luke* 23. 13 *Mat.* 57. when upon any particular *Doctrine* of his they were tempted to *reject* and *disown* him as none of the true *Messiah*. So our Lord foretells that many of his professed *Disciples* wou'd upon the Grievous and Violent opposition his Gospel shou'd meet with, be *Scandaliz'd*, 24 *Mat.* 10. i. e. tempted to *fall away from the Faith*. And thus Peter in his vain self-confidence said, *Tho' all Men shou'd be Offended* (or *Scandaliz'd*) yet will not I, 26 *Mat.* 33. i. e. tho' all shou'd be tempted to *disown* or *deny* thee yet wou'd not I. And 'tis chiefly on the account of such *Stumbling-blocks*, lay'd in Men's way to hinder 'em from Embracing the Gospel, or to seduce or deter 'em from the profession of it, that our Lord denounces such a *Wo to the World, because of Offences* (or *Scandals*).

But yet the Word dos in Scripture admit of a larger sense, and extends to such *Words* or *Actions* or *Omissions* of our's, whereby we sinfully occasion others *falling* into particular *Error* or *Sin*, laying before 'em a dangerous *Snare* and *Temptation* thereto. Thus *Balaam* is said to lay a *Stumbling-*

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Stumbling-Block (or *Scandal*) before the *Israelites*, when he advis'd *Balak* to lay such a Temptation before 'em, first to *Unclean-ness*, and then to *Idolatry*, 2 *Rev.* 4. So our *Blessed Saviour* accounts *Peter's* advice to be a *Scandal* or *Stumbling-Block*, when it would have diverted him from that particular Duty of *laying down his Life for us*, 16 *Mat.* 23. And the Apostle *Paul* reckons those would be guilty of laying such a *Scandal* or *Stumbling-Block* in their weak Brethren's way, who shou'd eat of things Sacrific'd to Idols in such circumstances as had a probable tendency to induce others to do it, whose weak Conscience wou'd either be thereby defil'd, or themselves tempted to entertain prejudices against the Gospel, by the free use that others made of their Christian Liberty. So our Lord speaks of our *right Eye* or *right Hand* Offending, or *Scandalizing* us, when it occasions our *Falling* into this or that particular Sin. As the *Covetous Eye* does the *Worldling*, the *Lustful Eye* the *Unclean*, &c. *Mat.* 30. &c. 18—8 v.

Having thus far clear'd my Way, I come now to consider more closely the Text it self, and accordingly, Here are *Three things* observable in it.

I. Our

I. Our Blessed Lord foretels, *That such Offences or Scandals, such occasions of Falling (whether into open Infidelity and Wickedness, or into particular Error and Sin) wou'd certainly come in our Way.*

II. He here denounces a *Wo to the World on the account of such numerous Offences or Scandals that would abound in it.*

III. He denounces a particular *Wo to such by whom such Offence or Scandal comes. i. e. who culpably lay such Occasions of Falling in the Way of others.*

Of these I shall speak in their Order,
And,

I. Our Blessed Lord foretels, *That such Offences or Scandals, or such Occasions of Falling (whether into open Infidelity and Wickedness, or into particular Error and Sin) wou'd certainly come in our Way.*

It must needs be that Offences come.

In speaking hereto, I shall

First, Shew by a brief Enumeration of a few particular Instances, *How fully the Event has verifys'd this Prediction of our Lord.*

And then,

Secondly, Consider, *Whence this Certainty of such Offences coming does arise, and what our Lord intends, when he saith, It must needs be that Offences come.*

I begin with the

First, To shew by the brief Enumeration of a few particular Instances, How fully the Event has verisfy'd this Prediction of our Lord, that Offences or Scandals wou'd come.

And here we may distinctly consider, those Offences or Scandals which occasion Men's Rejecting Christianity, or Falling from it, and those which occasion their Falling into any particular Errors or Sins.

1. We may consider those Offences or Scandals which occasion Men's Rejecting Christianity, or Falling from it.

And these Offences or Scandals arise either from those without, or those within the Pale of the visible Church.

Such Offences or Scandals have been laid in Men's way by those that are without, by Infidels themselves.

Such a dangerous Stumbling-Block was laid in Men's way, by the Early and Violent Opposition that both unbelieving Jews and Gentiles made to the Gospel of Christ.

For not only were many Thousands deter'd from Embracing the Gospel when they saw with what fury and rage their Rulers Prosecuted all the Professors of it, but many of it's Professors themselves were hereby Tempted to abandon their Profession, and to make Shipwreck of their Faith;

Faith, thro' the Terror of such grievous Sufferings. And this is what our Lord foretold, and the Event herein answer'd his Prediction, *That they* (i. e. The Infidel Rulers) *shou'd deliver up those that profess'd his Name, to be afflicted, and shou'd kill 'em, and they shou'd be hated of all Nations for his Names sake, and then shou'd many be offended (or Scandaliz'd) i. e. Tempted hereby to a Defection from Christianity.* See 24 *Mat.* 9. 10.

Nay, not only the *Malice*, but even the *Subtily* of *Infidel Seducers* did often lay a dangerous *Stumbling-Block* in the way of others, to pervert 'em from the *Christian Faith*, when they made use of all the *cunning Arts* of such as lye in wait to deceive, or (as the Apostle speaks, 2 *Thes.* 2. 10 v.) of all *deceivableness of unrighteousness*, all crafty methods of Seduction to turn Men from the Faith of the Gospel.

But besides those, from such as *are without*, Many such *Occasions* or *Temptations* to *Reject* or *Fall from the Christian Faith*, are laid in Men's way, by such as *are within the Pale of the visible Church*.

And O what fatal *Stumbling-Blocks* have been lay'd in the way of *Infidels*, to hinder their *Conversion to the Christian Faith*, by such as have *Profess'd* it, Partly by their

Scandalous Contentions and Divisions; Partly, By those gross *Errors and Delusions* that they have corrupted the Christian Faith with; Partly, By those *Idolatrys and Superstitions* that have crept in, to the defacing the *Simplicity and Spirituality* of Christian *Worship*; Partly, By the *Notorious Corruption* of Manners, and the manifold gross and shameful *Disorders and Immoralities*, that have abounded in the Christian World, to the great dishonour and reproach of our common Profession. And 'tis such *Corruptions* as these that have been a fatal *Stumbling-Block* in the way of *Infidels*, and fill'd 'em with such wretched *Prejudices* against Christianity, as have hindred their Embracing it. Nay, alas, How successfully have they Tempted many to fall from the *Christian Faith*, into *Infidelity* (or in our Modern Language to *Deism*) Nay into *Atheism* it self! And how many such *Scandals* or *Stumbling-Blocks* does the *Romish Church*, at this day, lay in the way of *Jews and Mahometans*! Not to mention those laid in their way, by the *Reformed Churches* themselves, thro' their woful *animosities*, and the Spirit of *Malignity and Persecution* that has appear'd among 'em, besides the great Scandal of their *Immoralities* too common with them, as well as with those of the *Romish Church*. So

So true was our Lord's Predictions,
That *Offences*, (or Scandals and Occasions
of Falling) *would certainly come*.

But,

2. As to those *Offences* or *Scandals* and
Stumbling-Blocks which occasion Men's fal-
ling into *particular Error* or *Sin*, They are
innumerable,

Such are all *Erroneous Doctrines*, espe-
cially all those that give any Encourage-
ment to Sin. Such are all the *Temptations*
and *Snares* which we, either on purpose
set before others to inveigle 'em into Sin,
or at least which have a natural Tendency
to Involve 'em in the guilt of it. Such
Stumbling-Blocks do we lay in Men's way,
when we, either by the *Terror* of *Sufferings*,
or, by the *lucre* of *Preferments*, put 'em un-
der a strong *Temptation* to *Embrace any Er-*
ror, or to *join in any corruption of Worship*, or
in any *sinful Practice* against the light of
their own Consciences. And such a
Temptation and *Snare* do we, by every *Sin-*
ful Practice of our own that fall's under
the Observation of others, lay before 'em
to *imitate* it ; So that our *Fall* has a Ten-
dency to involve them in the same Guilt,
so far as the influence of our Example can
reach. Nay, we may so unseasonably use
our Christian Liberty it self, as thereby to
set

set such a *Stumbling-Block* before others As those *Gentile-Christians* did, who by their *Eating things Sacrific'd to Idols* (which was Lawful in general, when not done in the *Idol's Temple*, where it was perform'd as an *Act of Devotion*) in the presence of a weak, *Judaizing Christian*, who thought it utterly unlawful, did Tempt him either to eat thereof against the *Light of his own Conscience*, or else to entertain *Prejudices against Christianity it self*, because of this *Liberty that the Gentile-Christians took* ; And on this account, The Apostle advises their refraining the use of their *Christian Liberty*, in such circumstances in which it wou'd probably prove such a *Stumbling-Block or occasion of Falling* to their *weak Brethren*.

But here, to descend to all the Particulars comprehended under those *General Heads*, were endless, and wou'd lead me far beyond the bounds of my present Subject.

I proceed therefore to consider,

Secondly, Whence the *Necessity* of these *Offences* (or *Scandals*) coming does arise. And what our Lord intends, when he saith, *It must needs be that such Offences or Scandals shou'd come.* 'Αναγκαῖον γὰρ ἐστίν, &c.

Answer.

Answer. We must by no means here suppose, That our Lord intends to represent it as *simply impossible*, That such *Offences or Scandals* shou'd not come, or as if any Man were *necessitated* by any Act on God's part, to set such a *Temptation to Fall* before others. For the doing so, is a *Voluntary sinful Act* of the Person that does it, and for which he is liable to God's just Displeasure, and accordingly here is a *Woe* denounced against him for it.

But there are these *two things* here imply'd.

1. That the coming of such Offences is a Thing, that considering the General Corruption of Human Nature, was unavoidable without the interposal of a Miraculous Power to prevent it.

2. That God on the contrary has thought fit, for Wise and Holy Reasons, to permit it.

1. The Coming of such Offences is a Thing, that considering the General Corruption of Human Nature, was unavoidable without the interposal of a Miraculous Power to Prevent it.

And therefore what the Evangelist *Matth* expresses thus, *It must needs be, &c.* the Evangelist *Luke* hath it thus *'aviv' Ant'v' uti* &c. 'Tis not otherwise to be expected, but that Offences (or Scandals) will come. For
so

so the words may be better rendered, than as we render 'em, 'Tis Impossible, &c.

The *Doctrine* of the Gospel was so opposite to Men's *Prejudicate Opinions*; which they had imbib'd by Education; So contrary to the *Forms of Religion* then entertain'd in the World, especially so opposite to Men's *corrupt Customs* and *sensual Lusts*, that our Lord might well suppose, That it wou'd meet with violent *Opposition* and *Persecution* from the Infidel World; And consequently that this great *Stumbling-Block* or *Scandal* wou'd be laid in the way of Men, to deter 'em from *Embracing* it and *Adhering* to it. Nay, when that *Doctrine* was generally *Propagated* and *Entertain'd* thro' a considerable part of the World, It was easy to foresee, that, since many Thousands would croud into the *Christian Church*, when it had the *Countenance* of *Christian Emperors* and *Magistrates*, drawn more by the *lucre of Interest* and *Honour*, than by the *Love of Truth* or *Piety*, such would *corrupt Christianity* to *Model* it suitably to their *carnal Interest* and *designs*. The *Pride* and *Folly* of some wou'd introduce *New Opinions*, and prompt 'em (if in any *Eminent Stations*) to *impose* 'em on the belief of others. The *carnal Temper* of others wou'd lead 'em to *despise* the *Simplicity*

Simplicity of Gospel-Worship, and to Accommodate it to the relish of the Infidel World, by introducing something of External Pomp and Pageantry into it. The Ambition of others wou'd revive that dispute that begun among the Disciples themselves, when one wou'd think their external Circumstances gaye 'em the least Temptation to it, viz. Who shou'd be greatest? And in the prosperous External State of the Church, It cou'd not be expected, but that the strictness of Practical Piety shou'd decline, and that Licentiousness and Immorality shou'd revive, which worldly Plenty is so strong a Temptation to. And 'tis Natural for those that are in Love with their Sins to adapt their Opinions to their Practice, and to bring in loose Doctrines to Patronize and countenance loose Practices. And such a grievous and general Depravation of the Christian Religion naturally tends to Prejudice those without against it, and to Tempt those within to doubt the Truth of it, and to fall from it. Nay, from hence Innumerable Temptations will arise to lead particular Professors to those particular Errors and Sins, which are recommended to 'em so often by the Authority, or Example and Influence of their Pastors, &c:

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Our Lord might therefore well represent it as *necessary* or *morally impossible*, and to the highest degree *improbable*, that *Offences* (or *Scandals*) *shou'd not come*; Since without a miracle to prevent it, this was the genuine consequence of the general *Depravation* of Human Nature that wou'd lead Men either to *reject the Gospel*, Or if they feignedly embrac'd it, to *corrupt* it, and thereby *accommodate* it to their own *Sinful Inclinations* and *Worldly Interests*.

Nay,

2. Our Lord seems here to intend, That God instead of interposing his miraculous Power to prevent the Coming of such *Offences*, or *Scandals*, *has thought fit* for *wise and holy ends* to permit 'em, viz.

For such as these,

Partly, To manifest the *Excellency* of the Gospel in its *prevalency*, notwithstanding all the *Stumbling-Blocks* and *Temptations* lay'd in Mens way to hinder them from embracing it, or adhering to it.

Partly, To make a more *manifest Distinction* between the *Sincere* and *Hypocritical Professors* of it.

For what is elsewhere said of one sort of *Offences*, or *Scandals*, viz. *Heresies* or *Divisions*, may be apply'd to all, *There must* (saith the Apostle, *1 Cor. 11, 19.*)

be

be Heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. Our Faith appears to be Sincere, nay, Strong, when it can enable us to Reject the strongest Temptations to Infidelity; When no Offences or Scandals cast in our way can shake our Stedfastness and Constancy in our Christian Profession, not greivous Persecutions and Sufferings themselves. Our Sincerity and Impartiality in our Enquiries after Truth never appears more, than when it enables us to reject Errors, tho' recommended with the most specious and subtle pretences, nay, tho' Worldly Preferment and Dignity lye on the other side. Our Uncorrupted Piety and Holiness never shines brighter than when it conquers the strongest Allurements to Sin, and enables us to Swim against the Stream of Publick Example.

Partly, To Illustrate the Power of Divine Grace, and the Care of God's Indulgent Providence over his Church.

For 'tis a great Argument thereof, That notwithstanding such innumerable Offences and Scandals, The Interest of Christianity is yet so far upheld and maintain'd in the World; And that the Interest of Infidelity, Error and Wickedness have not more universally prevail'd against it.

'Tis owing to the skill of the *Divine Pilot*, that this *Ship* is preserv'd in the midst of so many *Tempests* and *Storms*, *Rock*s and *Shelves*.

And 'tis but congruous to his Wisdom to permit the coming of these *Offences* and *Scandals*, when he can and will thus overrule 'em for his own Glory, and for such Excellent Purposes of his Wise and Holy Providence.

I now proceed to the
 II^d. General Head, viz. The *Woe* which our Lord here denounces to the *World*, because of these *Offences* (or *Scandals*).

Wo to the World because of Offences.

Now the plain Intent of this is to signify to us, That such *Offences* or *Scandals* wou'd be of very *mischievous* and *pernicious* consequence in the *World*. That as such *Scandals* wou'd be *Given*, or such *Stumbling-Blocks* and *Temptations* lay'd in the way of others, so they wou'd be too generally *Taken*, and prove the sad occasions of their *Stumbling* and *Fall*. And the Truth of this is abundantly confirm'd by sad and woful Experience. How successfully does *Persecution* hinder the Progress of the Gospel in the *Infidel World*. Nay, how fatal an Engine has it been to obstruct the Progress of *Uncorrupted Christianity*

Christianity in all those *Churches* where *Papal Tyranny* is predominant ! 'Tis a *Bloody Inquisition* that so effectually keeps the *Light* of the *Gospel* out of *Italy* and *Spain*, &c. And how many *Thousands* has barbarous *Cruelty* forc'd in *France*, and elsewhere, to abjure the *Truths* of the *Reformed Religion* ! How many *Thousands* have been fatally prejudic'd against *Christianity* by beholding the shameful *Contentions* and *Corruptions* of the *Christian Church* ! What a wretched *Stumbling-block* is *Papal Idolatry* to *Mahometans* and *Jews* ! And who can express what the *Honour* and *Interest* of *Religion* has suffer'd by those *Wounds* she has received in the *House* of her *Friends*, I mean by the *scandalous* and *odious miscarriages* of its *Professors* ! How greedily are pleasing *Errors* and *licentious Doctrines* embrac'd ! What a pernicious influence have wicked *Examples*, especially of *Persons* in *Authority* and *Office*, and of such as are of any *Eminency* and *Figure*, on the *corrupting* and *depraving* of others ! And O how spreading is the *Contagion* of *Error* or *Sin* ! So that he who lays a *Stumbling Block* in the way of one single *Person*, and thereby occasions his *Fall*, knows not how far the *poisonous malignity* of that one *Offence* or

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or *Scandal* may *diffuse* it self. So that when we consider how innumerable *Occasions* of *Falling* are lay'd in our Way, 'Tis a wonder of Divine Grace that any are preserv'd *stedfast* and *constant* in their Holy Profession; But no wonder that the far greatest part do *fall* either into pernicious *Error*, or which is no less dangerous into woful *Irreligion* and *Wickedness*. Well then might our Lord say, *Wo to the World because of Offences* (or *Scandals*), when those are so *Numerous*, and do every where so greatly *abound*; And when the *Generality* are so dispos'd thro' their *Ignorance*, thro' their *corrupt Inclinations*, or in compliance with their *Worldly Interest* to be drawn away by 'em from the Interest of *Truth* and *Holiness*.

But,
III. We have here a *Wo* denounced by our Lord against him by whom the *Offence* or *Scandal* comes, i. e. against him that culpably lays this *Stumbling-Block*, or occasion of *Falling* in the way of others.

For this is suppos'd to be a very heinous and aggravated *Crime*, both by this *Wo* denounc'd against him that commits it, and by the foregoing Words in which our Lord tells us, *That if any Man thus scandalize the least of his Disciples, It had been*

been better for him that a Mill-stone were ty'd about his Neck, and he thrown into the midst of the Sea.

Now I take this *Wo* to be chiefly denounc'd against those that endeavour to pervert Men from the *Faith* or *Practice* of the Gospel, and to draw 'em into *Infidelity* or *Wickedness*, whether it be by *Terrors* or *Flattery*, or by *Subtle Arts* of *Seduction*, or by the Influence of their *Persuasions* and *Example*. And no wonder that our *Saviour* shou'd denounce such a *Wo* against those, that besides their own guilt, are so *accessary* to the *Sin* and *Ruin* of others, by laying such *occasions* of *Falling* in their way. And I wou'd particularly have those consider this *Threatning* as levell'd against them, who by their own *Scandalous Mis-carriages* bring an *Evil Report* on *Religion*, encourage others to the like *Wickedness*, or harden 'em in it. For such lay a dangerous *Stumbling-Block* in the way of others, that *many* are in danger of *falling* by. And such as these have no other way to escape the *Wo* denounc'd in the Text, than by a *deep Repentance* for such *shameful Offences*, a serious Endeavour to prevent, as far as they can, the pernicious influence of their *Example*, and by using the utmost care to retrieve the Honour of Religion,

Religion, as far as possible, by their accurate and circumspect behaviour, that so their *Repentance* may be as *observable* as their *Fault* has been.

And doubtless this *Wo* must be understood as only taking place, where this guilt is *impenitently persisted in*, and not as *excluding* all such as have once incurr'd it from *finding mercy* upon their *unfeigned Repentance*, and serious Endeavours to undo their past Sin herein, as far as they can. But without such *Repentance* the guilt of such Men is greatly enhanc'd; by their contributing so much to the *Seduction* and *Fall* of others; And they will have others *Errors* and *Sins* as well as their own to Answer for. Nay, their guilt will be measur'd by the *Tendency* of their *Actions*, even tho' the *pernicious Consequences* of 'em shou'd be *prevented*. They will be charg'd with laying the *Snare and Temptation*, tho' none shou'd actually *fall* into it. They lay'd the *Poyson*, tho' none *drunk* it down. And since the Guilt of such is so great on the account of those *pernicious Effects* it tended to produce, No wonder that our Blessed Lord does here denounce so solemn a *Wo* against 'em. *Wo to him by whom the Offence comes.* q. d. His guilt is hainous indeed, he being accountable for all the *pernicious Consequences* of it. It

It now remains that we Apply this Practical Subject.

Has our Lord foretold, *That such Offences and Scandals will certainly come?* Has he forewarn'd us of the mischievous and sad Effects they will produce in the World? And has he denounc'd such a solemn Wo against those by whom they come?

Then,

I. It concerns all of us to take care, *That we be not scandaliz'd our selves, or, That those Offences that abound in the World do not occasion our Stumbling and Fall.*

And,

II. It does as much concern us to take care, *That we do not scandalize others, i. e. occasion their Fall, by laying any Stumbling-Block or Temptation in their way.*

I. It concerns all of us to take great Care, *That we be not scandaliz'd our selves, i. e. That those Offences, those Scandals or Stumbling-Blocks, that abound in the World, do not occasion our Fall.*

And in speaking to this Branch of my Exhortation from this Passage,

I shall,

First, Take Notice of some of the Principal Scandals and Stumbling-Blocks that do lye in our way, and suggest something to prevent your *Falling by 'em.*

P p

Secondly,

Secondly, Urge this Caution and Care by such Arguments as the Text suggests.

First, I shall take Notice of some of the Principal Scandals or Stumbling-Blocks that lye in our way, and suggest something to prevent your Falling by 'em. As,

'Tis a great Stumbling-Block or Scandal cast in our way, to behold the woful Divisions and Schisms that are in the Christian World, and with what confidence the several Contending Parties condemn each other. This is a strong Temptation either to doubt of the Truth of Christianity, or to suspend our Assent to it till those that so earnestly contend about it seem better agreed among themselves, or to uncharitableness towards those that differ from us.

Again, 'Tis another great Stumbling-Block or Scandal in our way, when we either behold the general Corruption of Manners in the Christian Church, or see the shameful Falls, of such as have made a Specious and Eminent Profession of Religion; That general Corruption that abounds in the Christian Church, Tempts Men to disbelieve, and despise the Gospel it self, when it seems to produce no better Effects than Pagan Philosophy.

And

And the *shameful Falls* of *Eminent Professors*, are a strong Temptation, either to take the same Liberty, and to imitate their Falls, or on the Account of 'em to look upon all *Religion* as a *Cheat*.

Again, 'Tis another great *Stumbling-Block* or *Scandal* in our way, when we see *Religion* prostituted to *Worldly Designs* and *Interest*; This Tempts us to censure all *Religion* as *Priest-Craft*.

Again, 'Tis another great *Stumbling-Block*, when we see *Truth Persecuted* and *Oppress'd* by those that are in Power. Nay, when in matters that are disputed, *Secular Honours* and *Preferments*, are on that side, which we have great reason to think to be in the wrong. This is a strong Temptation to abandon the Truth, when 'tis like to expose us to *Sufferings*, and to make our *Judgments* bend and *truckle* to our *Worldly Interest*.

Again, 'Tis another great *Stumbling-Block* and *Scandal* in our Way, when we see the *Blind* and *misguided Zeal*, of many *Professors*, and the *woful Fruits* thereof: This is a strong Temptation to wretched *Lukewarmness* and *Neutrality* in the Cause of God.

I shall begin with that which I mentioned as the *Second*.

I. 'Tis a great *Scandal* and *Stumbling-Block* in our way, when we behold the *general Corruption of Manners* in the *Christian World*, Especially when we see the *shameful Falls* of such as have once made an *Eminent and specious Profession of Religion*. This *general Corruption*, lays before us a strong *Temptation*, to entertain *mean thoughts* of *Christianity*, when it produces no better *Fruits* in the *Generality* of those that profess it; And the *Falls* of such *Eminent Professors*, Tempt us either to *imitate* 'em, or on the *Account* of 'em to *suspect* all *Religion* as a *Cheat*.

I shall begin with the *Latter*, viz.

The *shameful Falls* of such as have once made a *specious and Eminent Profession of Religion*. These are a very common *Stumbling-Block* and *Scandal* in our way. And accordingly, They prove a *dangerous Temptation* to some, to *imitate* their *Example*, and take the same *Liberty* they have done; Others are Tempted farther by 'em, to censure all *Religion* as a *Cheat*, and the *Professors* of it as *Hypocrites*.

First, To some the *shameful Falls* of such as have once made a *specious and Eminent Profession of Religion* prove a strong *Temptation* to *imitate their Sins*, and venture upon the same *Liberty* they have taken.

They

They are ready to say, If such a one that has so fair a Reputation for Piety, cou'd be *Drunk*, or *Unclean*, or in his *Passion Curse* and *Swear*, &c. Why may not I? Why shou'd I be more *Scrupulous* then he? Nay, if he hope to be sav'd notwithstanding, why may not I? Nay, to this wretched purpose many abuse the *Examples* of the *Falls* of good *Men* recorded in Scripture, as an Encouragement to venture upon their guilt, in hopes of easily obtaining the same forgiveness that they did.

Now that you may not *Stumble* at this common *Rock of Offence*; That the *Falls* of such *Eminent Professors* may not occasion yours, by *Emboldening* you to imitate their hainous *miscarriages*, I wou'd offer a few *Considerations* to prevent it.

As,

1. The *Precepts* of the Gospel, and not the *Examples* of its *Professors*, are to be your *Rule*.

All the *Practices* of good Men, that are Recorded in the Holy Scriptures themselves, are by no means propos'd as *Patterns* for our *Imitation*. The *Rule* is *strait*, but their *Lines* were often very *Grooked*. Nay, many of their *Practices* are censured as highly displeasing to God, and set before

us

us as awful *Instances* of *Human Instability*, and *Warnings* of our extreme danger by strong Temptations. Much less must we make their *Examples* our *Rule*, who have had a specious Name for Piety in the Age wherein we live. We must be *followers* of *them*, no farther than they are *Followers* of *Christ*, and must therefore make his *unerring Law*, not their *mutable practice* our *Directory* and *Guide*. If their Actions manifestly swerve from it, We have no more reason to follow them, than we wou'd a Guide that our own Eyes plainly tell us, wou'd lead us quite out of the way, even into Bogs and Precipices. There are *Hypocrites* as well as real *Saints*, and all that make a fair shew of Religion do not live agreeably to it.

2. There is nothing in their shameful *Falls*, or in the *consequences* of 'em that shou'd *Encourage* and *Embolden* us to *imitate* 'em, but rather what shou'd *affright* and *deter* us from it.

If there be any thing in their *Scandalous Miscarriages* that shou'd encourage us to imitate 'em, It must be either that we think their State safe, notwithstanding such *Scandalous Miscarriages*, tho' they shou'd impenitently persist in 'em; Or that

that we hope to repent as well as they, and upon our *Repentance* to obtain Forgiveness and Mercy.

For the *Former*, It wou'd argue great Ignorance of the whole Tenour of the Gospel, to suppose the State of such Professors safe under such Scandalous Miscarriages, tho' impenitently persisted in.

We are peremptorily told concerning those *Works of the Flesh* mention'd, 5 Gal. 19, 20, 21.— That *they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*. Nay, for such *Sins* we are assur'd, *The wrath of God will come on all the Children of Disobedience*—3 Col. 5, 6.— Nor will Men's former plausible Profession exempt 'em from this threatned Vengeance, or prevail with God to dispense with their wilful violation of his Law. We are expressly told, *When the Righteous turns away from his Righteousness, and commits Iniquity, and doth according to all the Abominations that the wicked Man doth, shall he live? All the Righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned, In his Trespass that he has Trespass'd, and in his Sin that he hath sinn'd shall he dye*, 18 Ezek. 24. Nay, a Wilful Impenitent continuance in any one known sin, is a strong Objection against all our pretensions to Piety, and a sure Evidence that

that whatever we pretend, We are *the Servants of Corruption*.

For the *Latter*, That we hope to Repent as well as they, and upon our *Repentance* to obtain Forgiveness and Mercy.

That this gives us no reasonable Encouragement to imitate their Sins, will appear if we consider,

1. How many thousands of such Professors have never recovered from their Falls!

Alas the *Instances* of those that have from a specious Profession sunk into, and persever'd in a course of open Ungodliness, that have been *entangled again in those Pollutions of the World which they had once escap'd*, that have *with the Dog return'd to his vomit*, &c. are very numerous and common. Whereas the *Examples* of such as have by deep *Repentance* recover'd their former Stability are exceeding rare. So that we may justly say at least *Vestigia pauca retrorsum*. And shall we venture upon those *Rocks and Shelves* where so many thousands have been Shipwreck't and perish't, because some few have escap'd? Is it any Encouragement to venture upon Poyson because some few by the strength of Nature have overcome it?

2. Consider, What sad Effects such Shameful Miscarriages have produc'd, even where they have been truly repented of, and forgiven.

The shameful *Falls* of Good Men themselves have been attended with those woful Fruits that shou'd deter us from imitating their Follys.

What a deep wound have they thereby given to the Interest of Divine Grace in their own Souls ! How have their *Graces wither'd* ! Their *Holy Resolutions* been *enfeebled* ! Their *Corruptions* regain'd formidable strength ! The course of their *Obedience* how sadly has it been Interrupted !

How much deeper a wound have they given to their own *Consciences* ! How have they lost all comfortable sense of Divine Favour ! Sunk themselves into disconsolate darkness, into Woful Uncertaintys and Doubts about their Eternal State, Nay, sometimes into great *horrors* and dismal *despair* !

And alas, How deep a wound have they hereby given to the general Interest of *Religion* ! How have they opened the Mouths of a prophane Generation in Blasphemous Reproaches against it ! How have they harden'd licentious Sinners in their wretched Course ! How

have they griev'd and discourag'd the Generation of the Righteous? How much mischief have they done to the Souls of others which 'tis doubtful whether they will ever be able to repair?

And wou'd any Man thus *Wound* himself in hopes that he may possibly be *heal'd*? When the *Cure* is like to be so *painful*, and when the ugly *Scars* it leaves may never be *worn out*? Shou'd any Man do so much injury to *Religion*, to his *own Soul*, and to *those of others*, because 'tis possible he may *repent* and find *Mercy*? Wou'd any venture to kindle such destructive *Flames*, in hopes that he may, tho' with considerable damage to himself and others, prevail at last to *quench* 'em?

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F I N I S.

S E R M O N II.

Concerning Offences or
Scandals.

F R O M

XVIII *Mattb. 7 v.*

Woe to the World because of Offences (or Scandals) ; For it must needs be that Offences come, But Woe to that Man by whom the Offence comes.

IN the *Application* of this Subject, I propos'd to insist on these two *General Uses*.

I. *It highly concerns all of us to take care that we be not Scandaliz'd our selves.*

II. *It does as much concern us to take care that we do not Scandalize others.*

I. *It highly concerns us to take care that we be not Scandaliz'd our selves. i. e. That the Stumbling-Blocks and Temptations laid by others in our way, do not occasion our Fall.*

In speaking to this Branch of the Exhortation, I propos'd,

I. To take Notice of the *Principal Scandals*, or *Stumbling-Blocks*, that are like to come in our way, and to Suggest what may prevent our *Falling* by 'em.

II. To urge this *Caution* and *Care* by such *Arguments*, as the Text suggests.

I. I shall take Notice of the *principal Scandals* or *Stumbling-Blocks*, that are like to be laid in our way, and shall suggest something to *prevent* your *Falling* by 'em.

And here,

First, I began with that common *Stumbling-Block* laid in our way, The general *Corruption of Manners in the Christian World*, and especially the *shameful Miscarriages* of such as once made an *Eminent Profession of Religion*.

Asto the *Latter*, the *shameful Miscarriages* of such as once made an *Eminent Profession of Christianity*, They may endanger our *Fall* two ways. Either,

I. By *Emboldening* us to *imitate* 'em in their *Sins*.

To prevent this, we shou'd consider.

1. 'Tis the *Precepts of the Gospel*, not the *Examples of it's Professors*, that we must account our *Rule and Guide*.

2. There

2. *There is nothing in their shameful Miscarriages and Falls that shou'd Tempt us to venture on 'em, but rather what shou'd affright and deter us.*

For we have no Reason to think their *State safe* under such Miscarriages, if impenitently persisted in, but the contrary.

Nor shou'd it Encourage us to venture on their Guilt, That we may repent of it as well as they, and upon *Repentance* obtain Mercy and Forgiveness; For how many Thousands of such Back-sliding Professors have never recovered from their Falls, but *drawn back to Perdition*? And how sad and woful Effects have their Miscarriages and Falls produc'd, even tho' repented of and forgiven?

Thus far I have already gone, and shall now proceed to consider.

II. The other way, whereby the *Miscarriages and Faults* of *Eminent Professors* may endanger our *Falling*, viz. By Tempting us to *censure* all *Religion* as a *Cheat*, and all the *Professors* of it as *Hypocrites*, because some appear such that once made a very specious Profession.

And alas, How many do thus *Stumble* and *Fall* on this common *Rock of Offence*? How many are Tempted to entertain wretched Prejudices against serious Christianity,

itianity, on the account of the Scandalous practices, of such as once made a plausible shew and Appearance of it? How many are induc'd hereby to *BlaspHEME the Name of Christ*, and to *speak Evil* of his *Holy Truths* and *Ways*? How many from the inexcusable faults of a few, are drawn to dislike, to reproach and condemn the whole *Generation of the Children of God*!

Now that this *Temptation* may never prevail upon any of us, that this *Scandal* or *Stumbling-Block*, may never occasion our *Fall*, I wou'd suggest the following Considerations.

1. 'Tis highly unreasonable and unjust to reproach Christianity with those Immoralities of it's Professors, which it clearly disallows and condemns.

This is as unreasonable, as if a Man shou'd censure the *Laws* of the *Land* for the *Crimes* of *Malefactors* which it forbids. 'Tis true indeed where any Religion does Countenance and Encourage Immoral Practices, we there most justly lay 'em to it's charge. Thus we justly reproach the *Romish Religion* with all those Cruelties of their *Bloody Inquisitions*, and other Publick Persecutions, which are not only openly Practiced and Avow'd, but are consonant to the *Decisions* of their *Councils*, concerning

ing the Obligation of Princes, to exterminate those they call *Hereticks*, out of their Dominions. So their *Doctrine of meer Absolution, disposing a Man for Absolution*, is justly censur'd as opening a Door to all *Licentiousness*. But for the *Christian Religion* it self, we may Challenge it's bitterest Enemies to mention any one *Immoral Action* that it gives the least Countenance to. 'Tis therefore most unjust to Entertain any Prejudices against it; on the account of the *Miscarriages* of those that pretend to embrace it. 'Tis not the fault of the *Original*, that the *Copy* is *blurr'd*; Nor of the *Rule*, that the *Lines* that deviate from it, are *Crooked*. Were the Lives of Christians conformable, either to the Tendency of that Holy *Doctrine* they profess to believe, or of those Holy *Laws* they pretend a *Subjection* to, or were they suitable to his *spotless Example* whose *Followers* they wou'd be accounted, Christianity wou'd shine with a Glory and Lustre capable to silence, and confound it's most Malignant Enemies, and to convince all the World of it's *Excellency* and *Divine Original*. Those *spots* then that sometimes stain the Lives of the most *Eminent Professors* of it, are indeed a clear Proof of either their weakness and Instability, or their Hypocrisy and

and Dissimulation ; But they are by no means any just Objection against the Gospel it self, whose Sacred Rules they counteract.

And farther,

2. 'Tis no less unjust to *censure all* that profess Christianity as *Hypocrites* because *some* are so.

In all these Cases, 'Tis fit that the *Guilty Persons* shou'd bear their own blame; But unreasonable that the *Innocent* shou'd suffer on their account. Men are sensible of the Injustice of this way of Arguing, in reference to any other Profession. There are many ignorant *Quacks* and *Mountebanks* ; But it will not thence follow, that there are no Judicious and Conscientious *Practicers of Physick*. There are many that abuse the *Law*, to the perverting of Justice, and prolonging of Vexatious Suits; But it will not thence follow, That either all *Lawyers*, or all *Judges*, are *Corrupt* and *Disbonest*. Many *Traders* are very *Fraudulent Dealers*, and vers'd in all the Arts of Over-reaching and Deceiving those they deal with ; But will any Man thence argue, That none of 'em are strictly *Honest* and *True*. And if every Man be sensible of the Unreasonableness of such Inferences, in reference to other Professions,

ons, Why shou'd the Inference be thought reasonable in reference to those that make *Christianity* their *Profession*. 'Tis no more wonder that some *Hypocrites* shou'd be found in the Communion of the Christian Church, than that there shou'd be some *blasted Ears* mixt with good *Corn*, and some *Rotten Fruit* grow on the same Tree, with what is *Sound* and *Good*; Nay, that the same Tree shou'd have *dead* and *corrupt*, as well as *Living* and *Fruitful Branches*. Are there some that dishonour their Christian Profession by Scandalous Disorders and Immoralities, so are there others that not only are free from any such Falls, but persevere in Exemplary Piety and Holiness to the End, and that in opposition to all the manifold Temptations they are surrounded with from the Flatterys or Frowns of the World. And we must chiefly judge of Christianity by those in whom the genuine and durable Fruits of it most conspicuously appear.

3. The great *Use* that we shou'd make of the *Scandalous Miscarriages* of *Eminent Professors* is, To make us more sensible of the *Instability* of our own purposes; more *jealous* over our own *deceitful Hearts* and *watchful* against the manifold Tempta-

sions we are Encompass'd with; 11 *Rom.* 20. 1 *Cor.* 10. 12. More *humble* and *diffident* of our selves, More Earnest in Imploring the Assistances of Divine Grace, and depending thereon, 2 *Phil.* 13. and more Compassionate towards those that Fall, being ready to restore 'em with a Spirit of meekness, knowing that we also may be Tempted, 6 *Gal.* 1. These are very proper and very instructive *Inferences*, which we shou'd draw from such *Exam- ples* of Human *Inconstancy*; And then such *Stumbling-Blocks* in our way will be so far from proving *occasions* of our *Fall*, that they will rather prove *Effectual Warnings* to *prevent* it. They will be so far from filling us with Prejudices against Religion, and Tempting us to forsake the Profession of it, that they will only Prompt us to look better to the sincerity of our own Hearts, and to *work out our own Salvation*, with more of *Cautious Fear* and *Trembling*, 2 *Phil.* 12. And accordingly, This is the true Use the Scriptures instruct us to make of 'em. (See the places forecited).

But I must not here altogether omit that *Stumbling-Block* that may be laid in our way from the *general Corruption* of the *Christian*

Christian World, the view of which has, I doubt not, Tempted many to Injurious thoughts of the *Gospel* it self, because they see so little valuable Fruits it produces among the Generality of those that pretend to believe it. From hence many are induc'd to doubt of it's *Divine Original*, and to prefer what they call *Natural Religion* or *Deism* before it.

To prevent our *Falling* on this *Stumbling-Block* in our way, I wou'd suggest a few *Considerations*.

As,

1. I have already shewn, That 'tis most unjust to charge *Christianity* it self, with those Faults of it's Professors which it manifestly Reproves and Condemns.

• It ought not therefore to bear the blame of any that live not up to it's Holy Principles and Rules.

And this leads me to add,

2. That the general *Corruption* of the *Christian World* is owing to such *Causes* as do rather *Vindicate Christianity* from the blame of it.

This general *Corruption* is most observable in the *Romish Church*, and among those of that *Communion*. Now among

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them,

them, 'Tis chiefly owing to the woful Ignorance of true Christianity which the *Profelites* of that Church are brought up in, by having the *Holy Scriptures* generally lockt up in an *unknown Tongue*. And 'tis no wonder the Gospel of Christ shou'd be ineffectual to reform the Lives of thole that never Read it, and understand no more of it than the *Priest* thinks fit to Teach 'em. Nay, their *Priests* themselves do generally deliver such loose and corrupt Doctrines to 'em, as tend to Encourage Licentiousness and to evacuate the Rules of the Gospel. 'Tis apparent, how destructive their *Casuistical Divinity* is of *Practical Christianity*. 'Tis manifest upon what slight Terms their *Priests* dispense their *Absolutions*; Their *Worship* in an *unknown Tongue* tends to stifle all Spiritual inward Devotion, and consequently to obstruct the influence it shou'd have upon their Practice. So that the general Corruption among them, next to the common Depravation of Human Nature, is to be alcrib'd to the pernicious Influence of Popery, so far as it stands in Opposition to true Christianity.

Nay, in the *Protestant Churches* themselves, the Corruption of *Manners* that is

too visible among 'em is very much owing to that Ignorance of the Gospel, which so greatly abounds thro' the Negligence of *Parents* and *Pastors* to instruct those under their Inspection and Care. And 'tis generally those places where *Ignorance* prevails most, that are most remarkably overspread with *Profaneness* and *Immorality*. As on the contrary, where the *Knowledge* of the Gospel is most diffus'd, There the *Reformation* of Men's Lives makes proportionable Advances. So that this deplorable Licentiousness of the Age is so far from being justly chargeable on Christianity, that 'tis chiefly owing to the little care taken to instruct the People in the Holy *Principles* and Rules of it.

But,

3. *Christianity* may in this respect justly compare with, and does far outvie any other Religion in the World.

It did upon the first propagation of it, make a very discernible and marvellous *Reformation* in the *Pagan World*. It banish't that *Polytheism*, and that *stupid Idolatry* that had so universally overspread it. It discarded those infamous *Magical Arts* that

that were so generally Practis'd and were had in so great Reputation. It freed Divine *Worship* from the horrible *Corruptions* of it, from the Scandalous cruelty of *Human Sacrifices*, from the *Odious* and *Abominable Rites* used in the *Feasts* of several of their *Gods*, in which the height of *Lewdness* and *Intemperance* were practis'd under the pretence of *Religion*. It did in a great measure restrain those *Unlawful Marriages* that were then common in a great part of the *Gentile World*, and gave a remarkable check to those irregular Lusts that so abounded among 'em before. What the Apostle speaks in reference to his *Converts* at *Corinth* does give us a true and faithful Account of the happy change the Gospel made in the *Gentile-World*, when speaking of *Idolaters*, *Fornicators*, *Adulterers*, *Effeminate*, *Abusers of themselves with Mankind*, *Thieves*, *Covetous*, *Drunkards*, *Revilers*, *Extortioners*, he adds, *such were some of you*, But *ye are Washt*, *ye are Sanctify'd*, &c. 1 Cor. 6. 9. 10, 11.

Nay, we need not be asham'd of comparing the *Christian* with any part of the *Mahometan* or *Pagan World*.

But

But the comparison will be made with much greater Advantage, if we take our measures of Christianity from the Lives of it's *sincere Professors*, and compare them with those of the most Celebrated *Votarys* of *Vertue* among the *Pagans*. Never did *Love to God* (that *Comprehensive Summary* of true *Piety*) or *Love to Men*, even to *all Men*, to *Enemys themselves*, (that *Compendium* of all *Second-Table-Duty*) appear in so amiable Instances and Effects, as in the Lives of true *Christians*. And how far do the Examples of *Humility*, *Mortification to the World*, and of an *Heavenly Spirit* and *Life* in them Transcend all that Occurs in the best of *Pagan Moralists*; And no wonder, when the *Rules* of the blessed *Gospel* so far surpass the best of *Heathen Morality*. So that tho' we have great reason to lament and be asham'd of the too general *Corruption* of the *Christian World*, yet we must own that what there appears of true *Piety* and *Holiness* in the *World* is most conspicuous there; And the *Christian Church* (notwithstanding all it's blemishes and defects) is the most beautiful Model of *Heaven* here on this *Earth*. True *Christians* are indeed the *Salt of the Earth*, and *Shine as Lights in this dark World*. I

I now proceed to a

Second Stumbling-Block cast in our way
viz. *The Woful Divisions and Schisms* that
are in the *Christian World*; And the con-
fidence wherewith the several *Parties* con-
demn each other.

Now this is a strong *Temptation* to some,
to *doubt* of the *Truth of Christianity*, or to
suspend their *Assent* to it, till those that so
earnestly contend about it seem better
agreed among themselves.

Others are hereby *Tempted* to *Unchari-
tableness* towards all that differ from
'em.

Now,

I. That the *Woful Divisions* and *Schisms*
that are in the *Christian World*, and
the *Confidence* wherewith the divided
Parties condemn one another may not
Tempt us to *doubt* the *Truth of Christi-
anity* it self, I shall offer the following *Con-
siderations* to prevent our *Stumbling* at this
Rock of Offence.

As,

I. The *Differences* and *Divisions* that
are found among *Christians* are not for
the

the most part about the *Essentials* of *Christianity*, but about *Human Additions* to it.

All *Christians* are agreed in owning those *Books* we call the *Old* and *New Testament* to be *Divinely* inspir'd. Only those of the *Romish Church* (contrary to the general and current Tradition of the *Christian Church* for 12 or 13 Centurys) ascribe the like Inspiration to the *Books* call'd *Apocryphal*.

All *Christians* are agreed in owning the *Creed* commonly call'd the *Apostle's*. Nay, almost all, in owning the *Nicene Creed* as the *Comprehensive Summary* of the *Christian Faith*. And our Principal Difference with the *Romish Church* lies about the *New Articles* they have added to the *Ancient Symbols*, of the *Christian Faith*, unknown to the *Holy Scriptures*, and never put into any *Christian Creed* for several Ages.

And for the *Reformed Churches*, Their several *Confessions of Faith* express a very happy *Agreement*, not only as to the *Essential Articles* but even all the *Important Doctrines* of the *Christian Religion*.

So that the *Differences* of *Christians* are rather about the *Corrupt Additions* that some have made to *Christianity*, than about *Christianity* it self, in the *Essential Articles* whereof there is a *general accord*.

And 'tis in those *Antient Summarys* that the *Christian Faith* has been handed down thro' all *Ages*, free from those corrupt and pernicious *Mixtures* that the *Romish Church* has gradually Attempted to *Adulterate* it with. And he that considers 'em will easily distinguish between what was the *Ancient Faith* of the *Christian Church*, and what *Unscriptural Innovations* the *Romish Church* in these latter *Ages* has made therein.

As to our *Desires*, or the *Petenda* of Religion, all do agree the *Lord's Prayer* to be a *Comprehensive Summary* of 'em.

As to *Divine Worship*, all do agree in making the *Blessed God* to be the *Supreme Object* of it, and in asserting Our *Lord Jesus* to be our *Mediator with the Father*. And this the *Scriptures* do most clearly assert. Our great *difference* about this *Point* is, whether *Angels* and *Saints* may

may be *Pray'd* unto, and whether we may apply our selves to 'em as *Mediators of Intercession*? And sure it shou'd be no great difficulty to discern that this is a *Corrupt Addition* to the *Christian Religion*, as well as the *Worship of Images* is a palpable contradiction to it.

Nay, all Christians are generally agreed as to the *Principal Parts of Christian Worship*, as *Prayer, Praise, Preaching and Hearing the Word of God*, and the *Two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper*.

The great *differences* concerning *Divine Worship* do chiefly lye about *Human Corrupt Additions* to it.

Thus we justly complain of it as a most *Unscriptural* as well as *Irrational Practice to Celebrate Publick Worship in an unknown Tongue*. For *Baptism* 'tis Evident, That those numerous *Rites* the *Romish Church* has defac'd it with are all meer *Additions* to our Saviour's *Institution*, who requires no more, than our *Washing the Baptized Person in the Name of the Father, &c.*

As to the *Lord's-Supper* all do agree, That 'tis design'd for the *Commemoration* of our Saviour's *Sufferings* and *Sacrifice*; and *Communion* in the *Vertue* and *Fruits* thereof. And all the *Popish Doctrines* of *Transubstantiation*, *Oral Manducation*, *Mass-Sacrifice*, *Adoration of the Host*, *Communion in one kind*, *Solitary Masses*, &c. with all the *Ludicrous* and *Pompous Rites* 'tis celebrated with, are either meer *Corrupt Additions*, or plain *Contradictions* to the *Simplicity* of our Saviour's *Institution*.

And for the other five *Popish Sacraments*, some of 'em are most improperly call'd *Sacraments* (as *Orders* and *Marriage*.) others are unknown to the *Holy Scriptures*.

So that there needs no more than *sincerity* and *diligence* in comparing the *Doctrine* and *Practice* of the several *Contending Parties* with the *Holy Scriptures*, in order to our distinguishing the *Christian Religion* it self from *Men's Corrupt Additions* to it. All are agreed in the main of *Christianity* it self; 'Tis *Men's violent Zeal* for *Human and Corrupt Additions*

tions that has occasion'd most of those *Divisions* that have weaken'd and torn the Christian Church.

2. Men do not allow this *Objection* against *Christianity* to be of any force in *parallel Cases*.

Thus 'tis no *Objection* against *Philosophy* it self, That there are such *Differences* of Opinions among those that pretend to it; Nor is it any *Objection* against the *Authority* of *Human Laws*, that they are liable to be *misinterpreted* and *perverted* contrary to the real Intention and Design of the Law-givers. No more shou'd it be thought any solid Argument against the *Divine Authority* of the *Holy Scriptures*, and of the *Christian Religion* reveal'd in 'em, that there are some who *wrest 'em to their own Destruction*, by endeavouring to Accommodate the Doctrines delivered there to their own Worldly Interests or Lusts, or by Obtruding and Imposing their own *Corrupt Additions* as a part of that *Divine Revelation*.

3. All the *Use* therefore that we shou'd make of those *Differences* and *Divisions* is,
To

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To compare the *Doctrines* and *Practices* of the several *Divided Parties* of Christians with the *Holy Scriptures*, with the greater diligence and care; and to adhere to the *Simplicity* of the *Christian Religion* reveal'd there, rejecting the *Corrupt Additions* that others have made to it. And he that sincerely *Believes* and *Practice's* what the Scriptures do clearly reveal, and what an impartial search into 'em will enable every serious Christian (by Divine Assistance) to discover, has that *Unity of the Spirit* that constitutes him a *living Member* of Christ's *Mystical Body*, and cannot be cut off from it by the *uncharitable Censures* that others may pass on him as an *Heretick* or *Schismatick*, because he refuses those *Sinful Additions* to Christianity which they impose as necessary *Terms of Communion*.

But that leads me to add,

That we must also take care that those *Differences* and *Divisions* among *Christian Churches* do not prove a *Stumbling-Block* to us, by Tempting us to *unchartable Censures* of those that differ from us.

To

To prevent that, we must consider,

1. Every true Christian has by the Exercise of his *Charity*, *Mental Communion* with all other Christians by whom the *Essentials* of Christianity are retain'd, without any such *Additions* as are *Destructive* thereof. And this is the *Communion of Saints* mentioned in the *Apostle's Creed*.

There is an *Unity* in *One Mystical Body* or *Society*, who are animated by *One Holy Spirit*, call'd in *one Hope* of their *Heavenly Calling*, *Subjected* to *one Lord*, *Entertaining one Faith*, (in respect of the *Necessary Articles* of it, of which the *Ancient Creeds* give us a *Summary*) *Dedicated* to *God* by *one Baptism*, and related to the *One God and Father* of all, who is above all, and thro' all, and in 'em all. And whoever partake of this *Unity*, we have *vital Communion* with 'em in all our sincere *Acts of Devotion*. We offer up all our *Prayers* and *Praises* as *Members* of the same *Holy Society*; *Children* of the same *Family*, *Citizens* of the same *Spiritual Community*, as a part of the same *Holy Priesthood*, and *Living Stones* of the same *Spiritual Temple*,
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concurring with 'em in the same *Holy Desires* and *Thanksgivings* offer'd up with the same Spirit of *Faith* and *Love*. So that our *Mental Communion* is thus *Extensive* to the whole *Invisible Catholick Church*, when our *Local* is confin'd to a single *Congregation*.

2. We ought to extend this *Charity* to many *Churches* with whom we cannot Lawfully Practice *External Communion*.

And the reason of this is plain, because the *Essentials* of Christianity may be retain'd by many *Churches*; who yet not only deprave 'em with *Corrupt Additions*, but impose those *Corrupt Additions* as *Terms* of *Christian Communion*. Our *Catholick Charity* must not therefore be always as confin'd and narrow, as the *sinful Impositions* of others often make it necessary that our *External Communion* shou'd be. Thus the *Eastern Churches* have corrupted the *Christian Religion* with a great Multiplicity of *Sinful and Superstitious Additions*: But so far as those are not destructive of the *Essentials* of Christianity which they retain, so far we ought to form a *Charitable Judgment* concerning 'em, and have no reason to exclude 'em from

from the *Catholick Church*, tho they are but a *corrupt part* of it. The *Degeneracy* of the *Romish Church* is far greater, and their *Pernicious corrupt Additions* to the *Christian Religion* in *Doctrine*, *Worship*, and *Practice*, render their Relation to the visible *Catholick Church* more dubious, being like so much *Poyson* mixt with the *Milk* of God's Holy Word. And yet we may without any *Prejudice* to our Cause, so far extend our *Charity* as to entertain some Hope, That in some of 'em, the *Essentials* of *Christianity* may in *Heart* and *Life* prevail against the dangerous influence of the *Poysonous Additions* of *Popery*.

But as to the *Reformed Churches*, There is far more clear and solid ground for our *Charity*. Their *Confessions of Faith* (as I observ'd before) manifest their *Agreement* in all the *Essential Articles* of *Christian Faith* and *Practice* too. And the *Differences* that remain among 'em chiefly relate either to the manner of *Administring* those *Ordinances* of *Christ* which all of 'em own, or to

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the Exercise of Church Government and Discipline, or some Opinions in reference to which True Christians ought to exercise a Mutual Forbearance and Charity. And nothing can be more absurd and foolish, than the Artifice of the *Romish Missionarys*, who to cry up their Pretended *Unity* would represent the Differences between *Lutherans* and *Calvinists*, *Prelatists*, *Presbyterians* and *Congregationalists*, *Pedobaptists* and *Antipedobaptists*, *Remonstrants* and *Contra-Remonstrants* as so many Different Religions, and would Perswade the World, that we are as *Uncharitable* in *Condemning* one another, as they are in *Branding* us all for *Hereticks*, and *Excluding* us out of the *Catholick Church*.

'Tis indeed true, That these remaining Differences are of some Importance and Weight. And 'tis our Duty to use the best Information we can have from the Holy Scriptures to discern what is in those Controverted Matters most conformable to that Sacred Rule; And 'tis no less

our

our Duty to fix our *Stated External Communion* with those Churches in which the *Christian Religion* is restor'd to the greatest *Simplicity* and *Purity*.

But 'tis no less our Duty to extend our *Christian Charity* to all that hold the *Head*, and adhere to the same *Common Foundation*, even tho' they may build some *Hay and Stubble* upon it. Our *Christian Love* is due to all that Embrace the same *Essentials* of our Holy Religion, and that appear to bear the same *Image* of our Blessed Lord, and to love him in *sincerity*, tho' their *Opinions* and *Practices* may in some lesser things differ from ours. And 'tis to those that wou'd confine the *Church* to the narrow bounds of their own *Communion*, and exclude all from their *Charity* that cannot come up to the same *Uniformity* with 'em in *Unnecessary Opinions* and *Rites* or *Unscriptural Practices*, that the charge of *Schism* chiefly belongs, which they would so industriously fix on all that differ from 'em, tho' they do it with a *Peaceable Spirit*, and without any *Uncharitable*

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Censures. 'Tis a Rule often mentioned and most justly Celebrated but too little Practic'd That we shou'd Aim at Unity in things Necessary, Liberty in things Indifferent, and Charity in both; Or in the Apostle's Language, we shou'd be studious to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, (even that of Catholick Love).

F I N I S

3. NO 63.

Concerning Offences or Scandals.

Sermon



From XVIII *Matth.* 7 v.

Wo to the World because of Offences (or Scandals) ; For it must needs be that Offences come, But Wo to that Man by whom the Offence comes.

Under the First Use, viz. That we shou'd take care that we be not Scandaliz'd our Selves.

I propos'd,

First, To take Notice of the Principal Scandals or Stumbling-Blocks that lye in our way, and to suggest what may prevent our Falling by 'em.

And here,

I. I consider'd that *Scandal* which arises from the shameful *Miscarriages* of such as once made a *Plausible Profession* of Religion.

II. I consider'd, That *Scandal* which arises from the *Woful Divisions* and *Schisms* in the *Christian World*. I.

I now proceed to consider,

III. Another common *Offence* or *Stumbling-Block* in our way, and that is from the woful *Prostitution* of *Religion* by many of it's Professors to serve their *Worldly Interest* and *Designs*, especially it's being made an *Engine* by those call'd the *Clergy*, to advance their own *Grandeur* and *Domination*, their *Luxury* and *Wealth*. 'Tis this has prov'd so fatal a *Temptation* to many to run down all *Religion* under the Invidious Name of *Priest-Craft*. And this is now grown so *Common* and *Popular* an *Objection* against *Christianity* in the Mouths of the *Infidel* and *Irreligious* part of the Age, that it requires our Particular care to *Answer* it, and thereby to prevent your *Falling* on this *Rock of Offence*.

In order to the *Removing* this *Stumbling-Block*, I wou'd offer these things to your serious Consideration, viz.

1. It must be own'd, and shou'd be Lamented, that the *Name* and *Pretence* of the *Christian Religion* has been grossly *Abus'd*, especially by those call'd the *Clergy*, to such *Mean* and *wretched Purposes* as these.

Of

Of this *Prostitution of Religion to Secular Designs* we have a Notorious Instance in the *Romish-Church*; The most of those *Doctrines* and *Practices* with which they have *Adulterated* and *Corrupted* the Christian Religion being wholly Calculated for advancing the *Wealth* and *Granduer* of the *Roman Pope*, and *Clergy*. And indeed that truly Divine and Admirable Institution was never more *debas'd* to such *vile* and *low* Purposes by any that ever wore the Christian Name.

What's the great Aim of their Doctrine of the *Supremacy of St. Peter*, and of the *Pope's being his Successor therein*, and of the *Church of Rome's being the Mother and Mistress of all other Churches*, but to *Aggrandize* and *Enrich* the *Roman Bishop*? For 'tis this *Arrogant Pretension* that rais'd the *Roman Popes* to such an Height of *Power* and *Domination*, as once made *Princes* tamely submit their *Crowns* to their *disposal*, and to hold 'em at their *Pleasure*. And 'tis the same *Pretension* that to this day draws such a vast number of *Expensive Causes* to the *Court of Rome*, and thereby drain's a great part of the *Wealth* of all *Popish Countreys* in-
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to the *Papal Goffers*. What serves the *Invocation of Saints, and the Worship of Images and Relicks* for, but to draw *gainful Presents and Offerings* from the blind *Superstition* of a deluded People, to the *Enriching* of their *Priests*? Of what use is the *Doctrine of Purgatory* but to *raise the Price*, and *help forward the Sale* of the *Priest's Masses* and *Pope's Indulgences*, which have been such an *Inexhaustible Spring* of *Wealth* to the one and to the other? Of what use is *Auricular Confession* but to enslave the *Consciences* of the *Laity* to their *Confessors*, and to keep 'em in a more *Blind Obedience* to those on whom they are taught to depend for the *Absolution* and *Pardon* of all their *Sins*? What serves *Transubstantiation* for, but to conciliate a greater *Veneration* to the *Priests* on the *Account* of this *Miraculous Power* of turning a *Water* into a *God*, and to enhance the pretended *Reverence* of that *Sacrament*? Nay, why are the *Laity* *debarr'd from the Cup* but to exalt the *Priesthood* above e'm, by so considerable a *Privilege* and *Distinction* in so Solemn a part of *Divine Worship*? Why are the *Priests* *extempted from the Secular Power*,
Why

Why are they *forbidden Marriage*, but to keep 'em more *independent* on the *State*, more entirely *subject* to the *Pope*, and to keep the *Churches Treasure* in the *same Channel*? What are all their numerous swarms of *Monks* and *Fryars*, in every *Popish Country*, but so many sure *Vassals* and *Clients* of the *Roman Bishop*, so many *Janizaries* Lifted in his *Service*, and oblig'd by their entire *Dependence* on him, to *support* his *Authority* and *Cause*? What serve all their innumerable *Rites* and *Ceremonies* for, and all the *pomp* and *pageantry* of their *Worship*, but to *amuse* the ignorant *Laity*, to heighten their *Veneration* for the *Priests*, that make up in all their *Processions* and *Festivals*, the most splendid part of the *Religious shew*? It were easy thus to run thro' all the main *Articles* of *Popery*, and to shew, How evidently these *corrupt Additions* to the *Christian Religion* are contriv'd to advance the *Dominion* and *Wealth* of the *Romish Clergy*; And how justly *Popery*, as distinct from *Christianity*, deserves the Name of *Priest-Craft*. And, *Wo be to those by whom this great scandal comes*:

Nor can we excuse those from some part of this *Blame*, who not only put

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down true *Scriptural Bishops* (depriving 'em of one *essential* part of their *Pastoral Office*) and in order to aggrandize Themselves, assume the *sole Exercise* of *Discipline* over some *Scores* or *Hundreds* of *Churches*, (by which true *Discipline* becomes really *impracticable*) but who in their *Courts* prostitute the most solemn *Ecclesiastical Censures* to *secular Gain*; and turn *Christ's House of Discipline* into an *House of Merchandize*. Nor can we altogether excuse those, that turn that *Holy Eucharist*, which is the common *Symbol* of *Christian Communion* into an *Engine* for advancing a *State-faction*, and endeavour to confine the *common Table of our Lord*, by their *Arbitrary Inclosures*, to a *Party*. 'Tis too evident, That *Religion* is hereby too far debased to *serve mean and unworthy purposes*.

But then I must add;

2. If *Christianity* be consider'd in its own *native simplicity* and *purity*, as layd down in the *Holy Scriptures*, Nothing can be more *unreasonable* and *senseless*, than to run it down under the *invidious Notion* of *Priest-Craft*.

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Christianity is so far from being calculated to serve any base *worldly Interest*, that never did any Institution carry such bright Characters of a *Divine Original* in its *heavenly Designs* and *Aims*. Its *Laws* are apparently *Divine* and *Heavenly*, requiring from all its Professors a *Crucifixion to the World*, by vertue of the *Cross of Christ*, and a readiness to renounce its dearest Interests, whenever they stand in competition with the honour and superior Interest of our Blessed Saviour. Our Blessed Lord has openly declar'd, that *his Kingdom is not of this World*. Its Promises and Rewards are as *Spiritual* and *Heavenly* as its *Laws*. It gives us the prospect of no other *Riches* than those that are layd up in the other World; Of no other *Dignities* and *Honours* than those of the *heavenly Kingdom*; of no other *Crowns* than an incorruptible Immortal One, even the *Crown of Righteousness*. Nay, so far was our Blessed Lord from Encouraging *Christian Pastors* to aspire to *Domination* and *Wealth*, that he most strictly caution'd 'em against that *scandalous Contention*, Which among 'em shou'd be greatest, Matth. 18. 1, 2,

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3. &c. He represents their sacred *Function* it self, as a *Ministry* and *Service* (conformable to his Own, who came to minister to others, not to be ministered unto) Nay in that *Function* he allows those only to be the greatest, who are the most eminent for *Humility* and *Condescension*. See Mat. 20. 25, 26, &c. Luk. 22. 25. &c. 'Tis indeed true, that our B. Lord has ordain'd, *That they who preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel*, 1 Cor. 9. 14. And, *That he who is taught in the Word, should communicate to him that teaches in all good Things*, Gal. 6. 6. But he has by no means impower'd such *Pastors* to add any new *Doctrines* to those of the Gospel for advancing their own *Gain*; or to enact any new *Laws* for *Aggrandizing* and *Enriching* themselves; or to prostitute his sacred *Discipline* to filthy *Lucre*. If any use such *scandalous Artifices* as these, the Gospel does no way *Countenance* and *Abett* 'em, but disowns their shameful *Practice* in thus *Corrupting* (or *Huckstering*) the *Word of God*, 2 Cor. 2. 17. And *making Merchandise of the Souls of Men*, 2 Pet. 2. 3. The Gospel gives no *Encouragement* to *Ambition* and *A-*
varice

varice in the *Dispensers* of it, but rather lays 'em under the strongest Obligation to be Patterns to others in all *Lowliness* and *Humility*, in *Mortification* to this *World*, and in an *heavenly Spirit* and *Conversation*: So that this *Reproach* cast upon *Christianity*, wholly arises from Mens wretched *Ignorance*, or gross *Mis-representation* of it, from their not distinguishing between our *Holy Profession*, and the *Practice* of such as *Corrupt* and *Debase* it.

IV. Another common *Scandal* or *Stumbling-block* often laid in the Way, arises from the *Sufferings* that attend either our *Christian Profession* in general, or our *adherence* to the *uncorrupted Purity* of it, in opposition to such as *Corrupt* it, and rigorously *Impose* those *Corruptions*.

This was a very common and pernicious *Stumbling-block* laid in the Way of all that Embrac'd the Gospel upon the first Propagation of it, when it met with the violent *Opposition* of *Jews* and *Gentiles*. And the like Treatment have those by whom *Christianity* was restor'd to its primitive *Simplicity* often met with from the *Romish Church*

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(that had reviv'd much of the *Pagan Idolatry*, under the *Christian Name* and *Profession*) And we have in the late Persecution of *France*, a sad Instance of many *Thousands*, whom the *Terror* of it prevail'd upon to *Abjure* their *Religion*, and to *make Shipwreck of the Faith*. And this is what our Lord has forewarn'd us of, That when *Tribulation* arises, many *shou'd be Offended*, (or *Scandaliz'd*) *Mat. 24. 10.* Thus we read of the *Hearers* compar'd to the *stony-ground*, that *when Persecution* arises, *because of the Word*, *by and by they are Offended*, *Mat. 13. 21.* See also *John 16. 1, 2, &c.* Nay such a *Stumbling-block* is laid in our Way, whenever we are tempted by the *Lure of Worldly Interest*, or *preferment*, to any *sinful Compliances* against the *Light* of a well-informed Judgment. Now to prevent our *falling* on this *Rock of Offence*, we shou'd consider.

I. 'Tis congruous to the *Wisdom* of God sometimes to try our *Fidelity* to him, by exposing us to such *Sufferings* in his *Cause*.

And accordingly they are a most proper *Test* to discover, how far we prefer the *Glory* of God before our *worldly Interest*.

terest and Ease ; how far our ardent
Love to him prevails against our *carnal*
Self-love ; how far our *Faith* in him and
 in his precious Promises can conquer all
 our sinful *Fears* ; Our carriage under
 such Persecution for Truth and Righte-
 ousness sake will make it evident, upon
 what *Motives* we have Embrac'd the
 Christian Profession, and how far 'tis
 indeed rooted in our Hearts. We shou'd
 therefore consider, that 'tis a shrewd
 Argument of our *Hypocrisy* and *Insincer-*
ity, when *Dangers* deter us from our
Duty ; when the Love of this World
 tempts us to turn our Backs upon our B.
 Lord ; when with the young Man *we*
go away Sorrowful, being (tho' loath
 to depart from Christ, yet more) *loath*
to quit our great Possessions ; when in
 any competition between our *Duty* and
 our *Interest*, we can make our *Conscien-*
ces truckle to our *Advantage* and *Gain*.
 Whereas 'tis a comfortable Argument,
 that our *Faith* is of the right stamp,
 when it can *bear the fiery Tryal* ; That
 the Interest and Cause of God is most
 dear to us, when we can Sacrifice our
 Lives or the most valuable Comforts of
 'em thereto ; that his *Love* reigns in our
 Hearts, when we can freely *forsake all*

for him; That our B. Saviour has the predominant Interest there, when whatever Scorn or Reproach, whatever Indignities and Sufferings may attend our faithful Adherence to him, *Yet we are not Offended in him*, (i. e. not tempted hereby to the least step of shameful Defection from him, or from his holy *Truths and Ways*.) And it wou'd greatly fortify us against this Temptation, thus to consider (when Sufferings in the way of Duty are in our Prospect) God is now about to try the sincerity of our Profession.

2. Let's consider, What are like to be the *final Issues*, accordingly as we do in case of Persecution prove *constant* or *inconstant* in the Cause of Christ.

And this consideration will easily shew us how little force there is in the *Temptation*, and how unreasonable our *sinful compliance* wou'd be.

Do *Sufferings* appear on the one hand in all their formidable Terror, to affright us into a Defection from *Truth* or *Duty*? Let us view on the other Hand that *endless Felicity* that shall be the certain Reward of our *persevering Fidelity*. And how far will these *Afflictions*

afflictions that are but *light* and *momenta-ny* be counterballanced by an *exceeding* and *Eternal Weight of Glory*? Do we apprehend, that our Zeal in the Cause of God will expose us to considerable *Damage* and *Loss* in our worldly Interest? Let us on the other Hand consider, that as that *Loss* will be infinitely compensated by the greatness of our *future Reward*, so there is a far greater Loss to be dreaded on the other side, the loss of our precious Souls, and the forfeiture of their Eternal Interests and Hopes. So that in this Case, *to save Life* by deserting the Cause of Christ, is in the worst sense *to lose it*, by losing the Hopes of a blessed Immortality, Mat. 16. 25. Are we afraid of losing the favour of Men, and exposing our selves to their Scorn and Reproach, by our *strictness* in our Christian Profession? Let us consider, how much more dangerous it is to lose the favour of God, and to be rejected with Scorn by our B. Saviour, who has told us, *That he will be asham'd of those before his Father, and his Holy Angels, who are asham'd of him or of his Words, in an Adulterous Generation*, Mark 8. 38. In a word,

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word, God's *promised Rewards* infinitely surmount any *temporal Advantages*, which our Duty obliges us to forego; And his *threatned Punishments* are far more *Terrible* than any *Sufferings* or *Torments* which we wou'd avoid by our shameful denial of his Truths and holy Ways. And if our Faith can realize these things to our Minds, it will maintain our *constancy*, and prevent our *drawing back to Perdition*.

Having thus briefly suggested such Considerations as may prevent your *falling* on these Common *Stumbling-blocks* laid in your Way, I proceed.

Secondly to urge upon you this *Caution*, against being offended or scandaliz'd, by such *Arguments* as the Text suggests; And I shall only mention Two.

I. Consider, *That our Lord has therefore forewarned us of such Offences, and of our Danger by 'em, that he might prevent our Falling thereby.*

He has told us, *It must needs be that Offences come, (or, That such stumbling-blocks will be laid our Way.)* So that we must expect to meet with 'em, and lay our Account for 'em : Nay I have already shew'd you, *That there are manifold*

nifold Occasions of our Stumbling and Fall which it therefore concerns us to prevent.

Nay our Lord not only foretels us, that such *Offences* will come, but intimates to us the great *Danger* of our *Falling* by 'em, when he denounces such a *Wo to the World because of Offences*. And this also is verifi'd by sad *Experience*. How many Thousands have been, by the *scandalous Miscarriages* of such as once made an eminent Profession of Christianity, either *Encourag'd* and *Embolden'd* to venture on the same Crimes, or harden'd in their prejudices against, and contempt of Religion on the account of the shameful Falls of such confident *Pretenders* to it! How many have been by the *scandalous Divisions* of the Christian Church, tempted to look upon Christianity it self as a doubtful uncertain thing, or induc'd to espouse the narrow Spirit of a *party* to the extinction of *Catholick Love*? How many have been *prejudic'd* against Religion, by seeing it *prostituted* to *base* and *carnal Ends*? And how many more has the dread of *Sufferings* discourag'd or driven from their Holy Profession, or tempted to

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to *sinful Compliances*, against the Light of their own Consciences? And when these *Blocks* in their way, occasion the *Stumbling and Fall* of so many, shou'd it not teach us the Apostles Caution, *Thou standest by Faith, be not high-minded, but fear*, Rom. 11. 20. and that, 1 Cor. 10. 12. *Wherefore let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall?* Where the *Danger* is so great and yet so common, It concern's us the more to carry about our powerful *Antidotes and Preservatives*.

2. Consider, *That such Offences are permitted by God for the Tryal of our Constancy and Steadfastness in our holy Profession.*

What the Apostle speaks elsewhere concerning *Heresies*, may be apply'd to *Offences*, *There must be Heresies among you, that they which are Approved may be made Manifest amongst you*, 1 Cor. 11. 19. 'Tis the Glory of a Christian's *Faith*, when it enables him to overcome the strongest Temptations to *Infidelity* that can be laid in his Way. It evidences our impartial Love of *Divine Truth*, when we embrace and maintain it in Opposition to specious *Errors*,
and

and adhere to it, even tho' the Temptation of *Preferment* and *Gain* lye on the other side. 'Tis a noble Tryal of our *Piety*, when we keep up the *strictness* of it in a *loose* and *degenerate* Age, stemming thereby the Tide and Torrent of *common Corruption*. And 'tis a most convincing Proof of our *Integrity* (as I had occasion to suggest before) when we prefer our *Duty* before our most valuable *secular Interest*, and can choose the *greatest Suffering* before the *least wilful Sin*. We shou'd therefore look well to our selves, that we *stand fast* in the *Hour of Temptation*; that we maintain our *Constancy*, notwithstanding all these dangerous Occasions of our Stumbling and Fall. We shall then happily escape that *Woe* that is denounced *against the World because of Offences*.

I shall only add, that in order to the prevention of our being thus Scandaliz'd, these two Things will be highly requisite.

I. That we do our utmost to keep our *Judgments* free from the *biass* of *Worldly Interest* or *sinful Affections* and *Lusts*.

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For 'tis this makes us so prone either to *reject* the Gospel, when we find the strict Profession of it irreconcilably Opposite to our sensual Lusts, and often prejudicial to our secular Advantage; or else, to *pervert* and *deprave* it, that we may accommodate and make it bend to our Interest and our Lusts. And therefore we may observe, that our B. Saviour subjoyns in the Words following my Text, this Direction for the prevention of our being *Scandaliz'd*, *Wherefore if thy Hand or thy Foot offend Thee, cut 'em off and cast them from Thee, For it is better for Thee to enter into Life, halt or maimed, rather than having two Hands or two Feet, to be cast into Everlasting Fire; And if thine Eye offend Thee, pluck it out, &c.* Vers. 8, 9. q. d. Tho' the Sin that endangers thy *Stumbling* and *Fall* be never so pleasant or profitable, tho' it be as a *right Hand*, or *right Eye*, yet *abandon* it, rather than expose thyself to the dreadful consequences of such a *Defection* and *Apostacy*. 'Tis our sinful *Affections* and *Inclinations* *within*, that render these *Offences* or *occasions of Stumbling* *without*, so dangerous;

rous; and 'tis by mortifying the former, that we are best secur'd against all hazard by the latter.

2. 'Tis also requisite that we *Engage the Divine Assistance by earnest Prayer.*

'Tis upon that, our steadiness and constancy in our holy Profession chiefly depends. We must therefore by *Faith and Prayer*, commit our selves to God's Protection, to be kept by his Power, thro' *Faith to Salvation*, 1 Pet. 1. 5. To him we must look up, as *alone able to keep us from Falling, and to present us Faultless before the presence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy*, Jude 24. We must therefore beg of him, that he wou'd *direct our Paths* while we tread in the midst of dangerous *Snares*; that he wou'd give us Wisdom to *discern and avoid the Blocks and Temptations* that lye in our Way, and *preserve us blameless to his own heavenly Kingdom*. We are then safest, when under the Divine Conduct; and that must be engag'd by humble Dependance and earnest Prayer.

I now come to the
IId Branch of the Exhortation from
the Words, viz. *To urge you to the utmost*

utmost Care, that you do not Scandalize others. i. e. That you lay no sinful occasions of falling in their Way.

To that End,

1. Beware of Entertaining and propagating dangerous Errors.

When persons of *Eminency* for *Learning* and *Abilities* are once thro' the by-
 as of *worldly Interest*, or thro' the influ-
 ence of *Pride* and *Self-conceit*, entan-
 gled in such *pernicious Errors*, Their
Name and *Reputation*, Their *Authority*
 and *Interest*, Their *Subtilty* and *VVit*,
 will greatly endanger the diffusing and
 spreading the Poyson of 'em to others.
 We shou'd therefore be very *humble*, ve-
 ry *serious*, and *impartial* in our Enqui-
 ries after Divine Truth, as considering
 that the deference that many others pay
 to our Judgment, may render it highly
Serviceable or *prejudicial* to the Interest
 thereof, by Establishing others *in*, or
 perverting them *from* the Belief of it. And
 truly this is one of the common Occa-
 sions of *Falling*, that often lie's in our
 way, *viz.* When we find such *Opinions*
 (as are really *dangerous Errors*) main-
 tain'd by such whose great *Learning* or
Eminent

Eminent Station give a great weight and Authority to their Judgments. And against this Temptation we must be fortify'd, by making the *Holy Scriptures* alone the unerring *Test* and *Standard* of our Faith; and examining the *Doctrines* even of the most Celebrated Teachers, by that certain *Measure* and *Rule*. For if they *speak not according to the Law and the Testimony*, 'tis because there is no *Light* in 'em. And sure if the Apostle *Paul* commended it as a noble Disposition in the Disciples of *Berea*, that they searched the *Scriptures* daily, to see whether what the Apostles themselves Taught, was agreeable thereto, *Acts* 17. 11. It can never be an *unwarrantable Presumption*, nay 'tis the necessary Duty of private Christians to use that *Liberty* in comparing the *Doctrine* of ordinary fallible Pastors, with those infallible *Oracles of God*. But since the generality of weaker Christians are too prone to take up their *Opinions* on Trust from their *Teachers*, and are ready to pretend want of leisure and capacity for more diligent and accurate Enquiries, it highly Concerns those that are their *spiritual Instructors* and *Guides*, to study the

X x

Truth

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Truth of God with great Impartiality and Diligence, lest they shou'd be the unhappy Instruments of misleading and perverting the Judgments of those whom they pretend to Teach *the Truth as it is in Jesus.*

But,

2. *Beware of all sinful and immoral practices.*

And O that I cou'd effectually inculcate this *Caution* upon the *Professors* of this Age! For (as I have already hinted) these are the most common *Scandals and Stumbling-blocks* that occasion the *Fall* of others. (Of which I shall speak more in the Arguments to enforce this *Caution*) The generality of Men will judge of Religion, not so much from the *Holy Rules* of it, layd down in the Word of God, as from the *practice* of those that make the most specious pretences to it. And if they observe the *Conversation* of such to be loose and disorderly, if they find 'em *unrighteous and fraudulent* in their Dealings, *unmerciful Grinders of the Poor, false to their Truth, addicted to Lying, Slaves to their Appetites or Passions, grossly covetous, &c.* They will be tempted hereby to censure Religion

Religion as a Cheat, and all the Professors of it, as a set of dissembling Hypocrites. And tho' this Inference of theirs be most unjust, (as I have already shown) yet we may easily foresee they will draw such a perverse Conclusion from these Premisses; and 'tis therefore our great Concern, as we value the honour of Religion, or the Souls of Men, to lay no such Stumbling-block in their Way. O let us then walk with the utmost circumspection, that we may not by any shameful miscarriage give any such Offence as this either to Jew or Gentile. Either to those within the Church, or those that are without, 1 Cor. 10. 32. Let us rather study to recommend Religion by a shining and Exemplary Conversation, that others may entertain more honourable Thoughts of it, by observing in our Practice all the amiable and beneficial Fruits of it. Let it be our great Concern to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things, Tit. 2. 10. To walk as the Children of God, harmless and blameless, without rebuke, in the midst of a perverse Generation, shining as Lights in the World, Phil. 2. 15. Let that Excellent comprehensive

Direction of the Apostle be much upon our Thoughts, *Finally Brethren, whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, (or Venerable) whatever Things are just, whatever Things are pure, whatever Things are lovely or of good Report; If there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise, think on these Things, Phil. 4. 8. Let us even abstain from all Appearance of Evil, 1 Thes. 5. 22. And make it one considerable Branch of our Religion, To keep ourselves unspotted from the World, James 1. ult. For every stain in our Lives will be a blemish to our Holy Profession, and hazard the defiling of others. (As I shall anon more fully observe.)*

3. *Let us beware of that unseasonable Use of our Christian Liberty that may probably endanger the Stumbling and Fall of others.*

This caution the Apostle Paul often enforces in his Epistles. As particularly in reference to *Things that had been Sacrific'd to Idols*; He shews, that tho' it was in general lawful to *Eat'em*, and a Christian whose Judgment was rightly inform'd, might safely *Eat whatever was sold in the Shambles, or offer'd at a Feast*;

Feast, yet if any *weak Brother* present, was in danger of misinterpreting this Use of their Liberty, and being tempted thereby, either to join with the *Pagans* in their *Idolatry*, or to be prejudic'd against the Gospel on the account of this Liberty, The Apostle requires 'em in those Circumstances, to forbear this Use of their Christian Liberty, when it thus endanger'd the Souls of their weak Brethren. This is the purport of that Excellent Chapter, 1 Cor. 8. He shews, that a true Christian knew *that an Idol was nothing*, and that he might lawfully Eat what was set before him; *howbeit* (saith he) *There is not in every Man that Knowledge; For some with Conscience of the Idol to this Hour, Eat it as a thing offer'd to an Idol, and their Conscience being weak, is defiled.* And therefore *tho' meat commend us not to God; so that neither if we Eat, are we the better, nor if we Eat not, are we the worse;* yet (saith the Apostle) *take heed lest by any means this Liberty of yours become a stumbling-Block to them that are weak,* Vers. 7, 8, 9. Nay so tender was the Apostle of doing any thing that might thus wound the weak

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Conscience of a Christian Brother; and occasion his Perishing (by tempting him to counteract the dictates of it) that he concludes with this remarkable Passage, Wherefore if meat make my Brother to Offend, (i. e. if it occasion his stumbling and fall,) I will eat no Flesh while the World stands, lest I make my Brother to Offend, v. 13. See also what the Apostle offers to the same purpose, at 1 Cor. 10. Ch. from Vers. 25th to the End.

And here indeed is a large Field for *Christian prudence* to exercise it self in; We must not satisfy our selves with the bare *lawfulness* of our Actions in general, but must consider also the *Expedience* of 'em. We must not only express a regard to our *own Consciences*, but to those of *others*. We must carefully weigh the *Construction* they will probably put upon our practice, and the *Use* they will make of it. And if we foresee that our present *Use* of our *Christian Liberty* will probably fill them with *prejudices* against Religion, or *Embolden* 'em to what is *sinful*; if we foresee it will in all likelihood prove to them an *occasion of Stumbling or Fall*; We must

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in such Circumstances forbear that Use of our *Liberty* that wou'd be *prejudicial* to their *Souls*.

And this is all I shall suggest in general in reference to this Head, because to treat it fully by descending to particulars, wou'd require an entire Discourse.

I shall therefore at present conclude the Subject with two or three *Arguments* to enforce this *Caution* against scandalizing others.

1. We shou'd consider, *How prone others are to be thus Scandaliz'd.*

So that if we lay any *Stumbling-block* in the way, 'Tis greatly to be fear'd, that it will occasion the *Fall* of others. And this we have great reason to foresee, that we shall not be excusable in presenting such a *Temptation* to others, even tho' the *scandal* we give be not taken. As it was no Excuse for *Peter's* giving such pernicious *Advice* to our *Blessed Lord*, to decline his approaching Sufferings, that his *Advice* was rejected: And therefore our Lord gives him that severe Reprimand, *Get thee behind me Satan, Thou art an Offence (or Scandal) to Me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of Men, Matth.*

16. 23.

Xx 4

2. We

2. We shou'd farther consider *the mischievous Consequences and Effects that follow when the Offences we give are taken by others, (i. e. when they stumble on the Blocks, that we lay in their way.)*

And alas, How little is this consider'd by those who so frequently give *Offence*! How little do those that first broach *damnable Heresies* and *pernicious Errors*, consider, How far the *pestilential Contagion* is like to spread, and how many Souls they may be the unhappy Instruments to poyson and subvert! Little do they foresee what *Mischief* they do to the Christian Church, and how many thousands they endanger the ruin of by perverting 'em from the simplicity and purity of the Christian Faith! And O how little do the *Romish Clergy* who of all have most grossly deprav'd the Christian Religion consider the Guilt they have Contracted, especially those of 'em who have been active to propagate those Errors by barbarous Cruelty!

And how little is this also consider'd by those that under a specious Profession of Religion fall into *scandalous Miscarriages*! Little do such forethink,
how

how many they may harden in their Infidelity and Contempt of serious Religion! How many Mouths they may open to *Blaspheme the H. Name & Ways of God!* What a Reproach they may bring on the *Generation of the Righteous!* Little do they consider, how far the *influence* of their *Evil Example* may spread! How many may take Encouragement from it to be more bold with Temptations, and to venture upon the same sinful Practices! Those whom their sinful Example has Infected may themselves Infect others, and so the Infection may spread to future Ages; the pernicious Effects of their *Miscarriages* may *survive* 'em, and may *remain* when they are *dead* and *gone*. Perhaps one single hainous Miscarriage may give such a *Wound to Religion* as all their *Repentance* can never *Heal*; and the pernicious Influence of it may *Corrupt* many whom their more circumspect after-Behaviour will never *Reform*. Many may *imitate* their *Falls*, who will never *imitate* their *Repentance*, And sure this Consideration will have great weight with us, if we have any due Sense of the value of precious Souls, and any serious

Con-

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Concern to prevent their Eternal Destruction : And if we have not, 'tis a shrewd sign that we have little Concern for our *own*.

And therefore I add,

3. We shou'd consider the *Wo* denounc'd by our Lord *against him by whom the Offence comes.*

And sure this shou'd make all of us tremble at the Thoughts of contracting that Guilt, against which such a solemn *Wo* is denounc'd. For we plainly see hereby, that the *guilt* and *ruin* of those whose *fall* we have occasion'd, will (without deep Repentance) be charg'd on *us* who have wilfully laid the *stumbling-Block* in their way. So that we evidently hazard our *own* aggravated *Damnation*, when we are thus accessory to the *Sin* and consequent *Damnation* of others. They may *Perish in their Iniquity*, but *their Blood will be requir'd at our Hand*. Nay so dangerous is it thus to lay *Temptations to fall* in the way of the *meanest Christian*, that our Lord in the Context tells us, *Whosoever shall Offend (or cause to Fall) one of those little Ones that believe in him, It were better for him that*

that a Mill-stone were hang'd about his Neck, and he drowned in the Sea. And sure if this awful Consideration will not make us *cautious* and *fearful* of giving Offence (by thus laying *stumbling-Blocks* in the way of others) no other will. O then let this terrible Sentence of our Lord sound often in our Ears, *Wo to the World because of Offences ; but Wo to that Man by whom the Offence comes.*

FINIS.

A
DISCOURSE

Concerning
The NATURE and EXTENT
OF OUR

Lord's Dominion

Over the Unseen

WORLD.

On Rev. Chap. I. Vers. xviii.

By J. B.

DUBLIN:
Printed in the YEAR, 1708.

DISCOURSE

Concerning

The Nature and Extent

OF OUR



Over the Union

WORLD

By Rev. Chap. J. Voss xxiii.

By J. B.

DUBLIN:

Printed in the YEAR 1708.

A

SERMON, &c.

Rev. Chap. I. Vers. 18.

I am he that Liveth, and was Dead; and behold, I am Alive for evermore, Amen : And have the Keys of Hell (or rather, of the unseen World $\tau\alpha\delta\omicron\iota$) and of Death.

I need only referr you to the foregoing Verses, for Understanding *who* it is that gives this admirable Description of himself. 'Tis one like unto the Son of Man, cloth'd with a Garment down to his Foot, girt about the Paps with a Golden Girdle; his Head and Hairs white like *VV*ooll, his Eyes as a flame

flame of Fire, (so quick and penetrating) his Feet like unto fine Brass, his Voice as the sound of many Waters, seven Stars in his Right Hand, a sharp two-edged Sword coming out of his Mouth, and his Countenance as the Sun shining in his Strength. Expressions that Import his *Supreme Authority, his Vigilant Providence, the Steadiness and Justice of his Administration, The large Diffusion of his Gospel, and the glorious Efficacy of it, and the Majesty and Splendour of his Person.* And no wonder that at so amazing a sight as this, *John* is here said to *fall at his Feet as Dead.* But our Blessed Lord raises him again, and checks his Fear; and designing to Employ him as his *Antanuenfis* or *Penman* in his following Epistles, or Messages to the Seven Churches, and in transmitting to Posterity the other Revelations relating to the State of his Church, he do's for his Encouragement premise this magnificent Character of himself, which I have now Read for your Instruction. *I am the First and the Last; I am he that Liveth, and was Dead, &c.*

For those Expressions in the Verse foregoing, *I am the First and the Last:*
They

They are evidently taken from the Prophet *Esay*. 41. If. 4. and 44. 6. where they are manifestly applied to the *Blessed God*, as a Description of his incommunicable Glory, even of his unchangeable Eternity. *I am the first and I am the last, and besides me there is no God.* And accordingly 'tis the same Person that in the 8. Verse of this Chap. saith of himself, *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is and was and is to come, the Almighty.* So full a Testimony is this Passage to the *Divinity* of our Blessed Saviour. And indeed the Power which he ascribes to himself in the words read is too great for any to manage to whom the Perfections of the Divine Nature do not belong.

But for that part of the Description which our Blessed Saviour here gives of himself in my Text, there are two Branches of it that I shall distinctly consider.

I. *That he who lives was dead, and now lives for evermore, Amen.*

II. *That (as the Reward of his dying) He has the Keys of Hell (or rather of the unseen World) and of Death.*

Of these in their Order; And

I. *He that lives was dead, and now lives for evermore, Amen.*

These Words I shall briefly Paraphrase, and then pass on to the second Branch (which I wou'd chiefly insist on.)

I am he that liveth, i. e. I am he that have Life in my self, or am self-living; a Character that the Blessed God often assumes. For so I think we may justly interpret this Passage from that parallel Place, John 5. 26. *As the Father hath Life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have Life in himself,* and consequently to be capable of Communicating it unto others. And accordingly, whereas the first Adam is said to have been only a living Soul the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven is said to be a quickning Spirit, i. e. empower'd to convey Life to others, having it in himself.

And this part of the Character our Lord assumes, sets off the next with the greater Emphasis, and makes it appear the more strange and remarkable, *That he was dead.* For how could he dye, that

was

was thus *self-living*? For doubtless if his styling himself the *living One*, refer to the *Divine self-living Nature* communicated by the *Father* to the *Eternal Word*, in that Nature he cou'd not possibly *Dye*: But as the *Eternal Word* became *Flesh*, or assumed a human Nature into a most near alliance and union to himself, so in respect of that human Nature he may be said to *dye*, and he did actually *dye*. *The Prince of Life was slain*, Acts 3. 15. *Αὐτοῦ τὸ πάθος*. *The Lord of Glory* was ignominiously *crucified*. 1 Cor. 2. 8. And you know there were great and important Ends in order to the glorifying of God, and securing our Salvation, that were to be attained by the *dying of the Son of God*. For as he *died for us*, or *for our Sins*, (being substituted in our Place and Stead as our Expiatory Sacrifice) so all the great Ends of God's Government that were otherwise to have been secur'd by *our dying for Ever*, were as effectually attain'd by his *dying for us*; and thereby the sure Foundation was laid (in point of Merit and Purchase) of our Release from the Bonds of *Eternal Death*, and of our Restorati-

on to Eternal Life. He that was under no necessity of dying, (his Divine, Being capable of enduing his innocent human Nature with the privilege of Immortality) yet for our sakes *became Dead*, that *his* valuable Life might become the *Ransom* of *ours*. He voluntarily submitted to this *Curse* of God's violated Law for us, that we might be *redeem'd from it*, Gal. 3. 13. His *Sufferings* being a valuable consideration for our *Impunity* and *Deliverance*.

And he adds, *Behold I live for evermore, Amen.* i. e. Not only does he live as the Eternal Word, (possess'd of that Life and Glory *he had with his Father before the World was*, as he elsewhere intimates to us, *John 17. 5.*) (For so he cou'd not dye) but he also *lives forever*, in respect of that human Nature he had assum'd; That human Nature is by vertue of it's Union to the Eternal Word now rais'd from Death and Dignify'd with the glorious Privilege of *Immortality*. He is on that account, the *first-born from the Dead*, the *first-fruits of them that now Sleep*; His Resurrection, and the State of Immortal Life which his entire Nature is

advanc'd to, being the Pledge and Earnest, and the satisfying security of our Resurrection and our compleat Immortality. And on this there is a particular Remark set for our Observation and Encouragement, *Behold I live for evermore, Amen.* q. d. Look not on me as *Dead*, because I now cease to live and converse on this Earth. For lo I now *live for ever*, having my self conquer'd and triumph'd over Death, & being now capable to give all my faithful Servants Victory over it, and to makethem partakers of my own Immortality. *I live evermore*, to pursue the great Ends of my Undertaking, till I have compleated the final Salvation of *all that the Father has given me*, and of *all that come to him by me*. And he adds, *Amen*, to denote the Infallible certainty of this great Truth, that our Minds may be fully perswaded of it, and may no longer hesitate about it.

And now he proceeds farther to assert, what I wou'd chiefly consider.

II. That *he*, (as the Reward of his dying) *has the Keys of Hell and of Death.*

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I say as the *Reward* of his *dying*, both because the Connexion of these Words with the foregoing imply's this, And other Scriptures expressly and clearly assert it. Of which more afterwards.

In speaking to this part of the Description our B. Saviour gives of himself, I shall,

First Consider, What we must understand by *Hades* and *Death* which our Lord here saith *He has the Keys of*.

Secondly, What power over these *Two* is imply'd in his having the *Keys* of 'em.

Thirdly shew, that this *Power* is the *Reward* of his *dying*.

First let us consider, What we must understand by *Hades* and *Death*, which our Lord here saith he has the Keys of.

For *Death*, I think there is no matter of Debate among Expositors about it. All do Agree that our Lord speaks of *natural Death*, that common *End of all Men*, that *way of all the Earth*, by which they must pass into the Unseen State.

But Expositors are not well agreed about the sense of the former Word [*Hades*]. *Hades*, which we render *Hell*. For there are three Senses here offer'd. 1.

1. Some (as our Translators) understand it of *Hell*, or the *Place* and *State* of the *Damned*. That Christ has the *Keys of that* : For so they think the Word *Ἀδης* does usually signify, as in those two noted places: The one, *Matth. 16. 18. On this Rock will I build my Church and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.* *πύλαι Ἀδης*. The other is, *Luk. 16. 23.* where 'tis said of the Deceas'd Rich Man, That *ἡ τῆς Ἀδης* in *Hell* he lift up his Eyes, &c.

2. Others understand the Words of the *Grave*, and so make this and the following Expressions to denote the same thing. *I have the Keys of the Grave and Death.* i. e. Can open the Grave, and recall Men from the sleep of Death there. Which they think most fully agrees with what our Lord asserts before, of his own *being dead, and now living for evermore*. And doubtless this is part of our Lord's meaning in this Place. And to favour this Exposition they alledge, that *Ἀδης* and the *Grave* or *Death*, are Expressions frequently us'd as *Synonymous*, and particularly in reference to our Lord's *Resurrection*, *Acts 2. 31.*

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But I confess, I take both these Expositions to fall short of the true Extent of the Word, and consequently to lessen that glorious Character our Lord here gives of himself, and that vast Authority he here ascribes to himself, and therefore choose to follow those,

3. Who understand *Ἄδης* of the *unseen World* in general, into which all the Souls of Men pass by *Death*.

And so it comprehends, not only the *Place* and *Receptacle* of *Devils* and of *damned Spirits*, but the *Regions* and *Habitations* of *Angels*, and the *perfected Spirits of the Just*, in a Word, the whole *Invisible World*.

And I choose this sense of the Word as preferable to the other.

1. Because this is most agreeable to the sense it bears, both in other Passages of Scripture, and in *Profane* Writers as well as *Sacred*.

If we follow the most commonly receiv'd Notation of the Word, It imports *the unseen State*. And those *Protestant* Writers that Treat of that Article of the Creed have Undeniably prov'd, That in those Writers that have best understood the Greek Tongue, *Ἄδης* do's import

import the whole of the *unseen World*, as truly including *the Place of the Blessed as of the Damned*. And indeed the Passages quoted to this purpose are too many to be enumerated, and too plain to leave the Matter disputable to unprejudic'd Persons. And there is just ground to conclude that this Word do's generally bear this Sense in the Inspir'd Writers themselves. For as the Learned *Grotius* judiciously Observes, *Hades* implies a *Place withdrawn from our sight*; and as spoken of the *Body* refers to the *Grave*, as spoken of the *Soul* refers to the whole of the *Invisible World*: So that *Lazarus* was as truly in *Hades* as the *Rich man*, only they were in different Regions. And which particular Region the *Rich man* was in is intimated by his *being in Torment*. And Christ's Soul being not left in *Hades*, imports no more than its not being left in a State of separation from the Body: As appears by his Promise to the penitent Thief, *This Day thou shalt be with me in Paradise*, Luk. 23. 43. And that the Hebrew Word [*Sheol*] to which *Hades* Answer's shou'd not be confin'd to *Hell*, is apparent from *Jacob's* desiring to go thither to his Son, Gen. 37. 35. So

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So that there is no ground from the common signification and use of the Word to confine the sense of it, either to the *Grave*, or to the *Place of the Damned*; It do's properly extend to the whole of the *Unseen State*.

2. This larger sense of the Word is most agreeable to other passages of Scripture that speak of the *Extent of Christ's Dominion*.

For as to the *Thing it self* 'tis past all doubt, that *Christ's Authority* is by no means confin'd to that part of the *unseen World*, which we call *Hell*, and which is the *Region of the Damned*. For the Scriptures assure us, it extends to the *heavenly Regions*; Even *Angels* as well as *glorify'd Saints* are *subjected* to it. *All power in Heaven it self is given to him*. Of which more will anon occur. And consequently,

3. This larger sense of the Word tends far more to magnifie the Power, and enlarge the Dominion of our *Blessed Saviour*.

It wou'd rather sink and lessen the Character he here gives of himself, if all he meant by his having the *Keys of Hades* were only that he has the *Key* of

of that bottomless Pit of Darkneſs into which he can doom Devils or the diſlodged Souls of impenitent Sinners, and if he pleaſe, ſhut 'em up there : For tho' this be really a branch of his Power, yet 'tis comparatively the *leſt valuable and glorious* part of it. And to deſcribe himſelf by that were as incongruous as if (to uſe the Expreſſions of an excellent Divine) to magnify a Perſon of the *highest Dignity* in the Court of a mighty Prince, one ſhou'd ſay, He is the *Keeper of the Dungeon*.

Whereas, if we take the Word in its juſt Latitude for the whole of the *unſeen World*, including the *Regions of Light and Glory* as well as thoſe of *Darkneſs*, and the *Inhabitants* of the *one* as well as the *other*; Then indeed the Deſcription of him appears truly great and honourable, viz. *That he is Lord of the inviſible World* : That in that *unſeen State* into which our diſlodged Souls enter, he exerciſes a ſovereign Empire, and all things are at his Diſpoſal. And how vaſt and illuſtrious a Power this implies, will more fully appear when we come to conſider the particulars included therein.

All therefore I shall add on this Head is to subjoin,

That this sense of the Word well agree's with what follows. Our Lord *has the Keys of the unseen World*, and of *Death* which is the *passage* out of this World into it. He not only Rule's in that *invisible State*, but also command's this *Portal* that gives us *Entrance* into it.

Having thus fixt the sense of the words, and consequently what is the Object of that Dominion and Power here ascrib'd to our Blessed Saviour, viz. *the whole unseen World*, and *Death* the *Gate* that leads into it. I come

Secondly, To shew what *Power* over the *unseen World*, and over *Death*, is here ascrib'd to our Blessed Saviour, when 'tis said, *he has the Keys of 'em*.

Ans. 'Tis in general evident, That the *Keys* are the common *Ensigns* of *Authority*. Only they do most properly denote *ministerial Authority* deputed to the person who is entrusted with 'em. There being (as one well observe's and illustrate's this matter) a manifest allusion to the common custom in the Courts of great Princes, to entrust the *Keys* with some great Minister as the *Steward*

over the unseen World, &c. 373

of the Royal Palace : And therefore when the Prophet foretells that *Eliakim* shou'd be prefer'd to that eminent Station instead of *Shebna*, he tells him, *That the Government shou'd be committed into his Hands, and the Key of the House of David shou'd be laid upon his shoulder; so that he shou'd open and none shou'd shut, and he shou'd shut & none open, i.e. None shou'd controul what he order'd and did.* And as *David's House* was typical of the Church and Kingdom of God, so in allusion hereto our Lord on the account of his delegated Authority over it, is said to have the *Key of David*, so as to open and none cou'd shut, &c. Rev. 3. 7.

And no wonder that he shou'd have such an Authority over the *House of God* here below which is but the *Porch or Gate*, when he has so vast a Dominion over the whole *invisible World*, and the *different Regions* that are therein assign'd to the several Inhabitants thereof.

All I shall therefore farther do, is to mention some particular Instances of this vast Power that our Lord has over the *unseen World*, and over *Death*, implied

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plied in his having the *Keys* of the *one* or the *other*. And herein I shall carefully attend to the *Light of Divine Revelation*.

As to his *Power* over the *unseen World*, we may consider these principal *Branches* of it.

1. All the *Inhabitants* of the *unseen World* are either his *voluntary Subjects*, or at least under his *powerful Controll*.

As for *H. Angels*, the *Scriptures* expressly assure us of their being subjected to him. Even those *Thrones* and *Dominions*, those heavenly *Principalities* and *Powers* think it not below 'em to be under him, *ministring Spirits to us, the Heirs of Salvation*. Even they bow the *knee* (in token of *Homage* and *Subjection*) *at the Name of our exalted Saviour*, and *acknowledge* him for their *Lord, to the Glory of the Father*, Phil. 2. 9, 10, &c. Our Lord is *advanc'd* even *far above them*, and they are *put under his Feet*, who is the *Head of his Church*, and *Head over all Things to it*, Eph. 1. 21, 22. And even those *seven Spirits before the Throne* which are in *Scripture* said to be the *Eyes of the Lord*, and

and to be sent forth into all the Earth, (which some judicious Expositors understand of seven Archangels, the chief Ministers of Divine Providence) are also call'd the Eyes of the Lamb, to import their being now his Ministers employ'd by him in the Administration of his Mediatorial Kingdom. Compare Zech. 4. 10. Rev. 1, 4. 4, 5. 5, 6.

And as Holy Angels are his voluntary Subjects, so evil Angels are under his powerful Controul.

He that on Earth cou'd bind that strong Man arm'd and at his pleasure cast him out of Possession, has not lost his Power to restrain and subdue that Arch-rebel and all his aëreal Host, (as they are call'd) Eph. 2. 2. Even all things under the Earth, as well as those in Earth and Heaven are subjected to him, Phil. 2. 10. By which the generality of Expositors understand Devils, because tho', thro' God's present Permission, the Air be now at least the Place of their frequent resort, yet the infernal Regions are the Place they are prepared for, and reserv'd unto as their proper Habitation. And these accursed Fiends our Lord can when he pleases bind up, and

and confine to that bottomless Pit, of which he also has the Key. For if we understand the 20 Rev. 1, 2. &c. of a *Created Angel*, doubtless he acted therein as deputed by Christ the Head of Angels. He can either check and curb their Malice, or frustrate their Designs, and over-rule their Attempts to his own Glory, and the Advancement of his own Kingdom. They are always under his Restraint, and as it were held in Chains by him, being unable to stir without his Sufferance and Permission.

And what has been said in reference to *Good and Bad Angels*, is equally applicable to those other Inhabitants of the unseen World the *dislodged Souls of Men*: They do either yield a voluntary, or must yield a forced Subjection to his sovereign Power.

But this leads me to add,
2. It belongs to our Blessed Saviour to assign to *dislodged Souls* their Place and State in that *unseen World* which by Death they enter into.

That both are not receiv'd into the same Place, Our Saviour sufficiently intimates in the parable of the *Rich Man and Lazarus*: The one was in *Abraham's*

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ham's *Bosom* (a place of Rest and Bliss) The other was in a place of Torment (as himself calls it, *Luke 16. 28.*) And between these far distant Places of Abode there was a great *Chasm* or *Gulph* fixt that render'd all *Passage* from the one to the other *Impossible*. Verse 26. Now our Lord has the *Keys of this Unseen World*, and accordingly as our dislodged Spirits enter into it prepar'd or unprepar'd, it belongs to him by his particular Sentence (as the *preludium* of his final one) either to open to 'em the Gate of the *Heavenly Paradise*, and to admit 'em into the *Regions of the Blessed*; or to open to 'em the Gate of the *infernal Prison*, and to appoint their being detained there to the terrible Judgement of the Great Day. So that on his decisive Judgment it depends to what Regions in that vast *invisible World* we shall be Translated, and what our Condition and Lot there must be. He before whose Tribunal we must make a general Appearance in our entire Nature at the last Day, will at Death begin some preparatory Exercise of his judicial Power, by sending our separated Souls to their proper Place and Company, to which

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they

they are by their past Temper and Life most Adapted. He will either then appoint his *Holy Angels* as our powerful *Guard*, to convoy our departing Spirits into those particular Mansions of Glory He has allotted to 'em, and prepar'd for 'em, (as he did in the foremention'd Case of *Lazarus*) or leave those that are *Satan's vassals* to become the wretched prey of those *accursed Fiends* they have so voluntarily enslav'd themselves unto, who shall then seize on 'em, and drag 'em to the Regions of Darkness, and make 'em the miserable Objects of their unrestrained and mischievous Malice, of their arbitrary and ignominious Tyranny. In a Word, He has the Key both of the *Heavenly Palace*, and of the *Infernal Abyss and Dungeon*, and by his doom it must be determin'd, in whether of these our dislodged Souls must take up their perpetual Abode.

As to the *Keys of Death*, or the Power of our Lord over that, we may conceive these two Branches of it.

I. That it belongs to him to determine *when* and *how* we shall dye.

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He commands this great *Passage* from this *visible*, to the other *Invisible World*. We must go out of the *one* into the *other*, whenever he pleases to *turn the Key*. 'Tis not a matter that depends on our Pleasure, or on meer fortuitous Accidents, and unguided Chance. No, the *turning the Key of Death* is an Act of his *Ministerial Authority* as the *Lord both of the Quick and Dead*, and therefore depends on his own wise determination. For this reason he assumes to himself the Power of *giving us a space of Repentance here*, Rev. 2. 21. 'Tis he allots us our determinate Time of preparation for the unseen State; 'Tis his *flaming Eye* that observes how we do or do not improve it, and 'tis He by his authoritative Act that puts an End to our *State of Trial* and *Day of Grace* here, and by the turn of this *Key of Death* transmitts us to our *State of final Retribution* in the invisible World.

2. It implies also that it belongs to him to *open the Door of the Grave* and *rescue our Bodies* that are detained there.

He has the *Key of that Prison*, and can sett the *Prisoners of Hope* that are held there, at Liberty. He that cou'd

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not be *held by the Pains of Death* himself, but *loosed the Bands of it*, can and in due time will give our Bodies a general *Release*. When he shall turn this *Key of Death* at the general *Resurrection*, even *all that are in their Graves* shall hear his *Voice*, and in *Obedience* to his *Summons* come forth, tho' some to the *Resurrection of Life*, others to the *Resurrection of Damnation*, John 5. 28, 29. *Death* and (*Hades* or) the *Invisible State* must both *Resign up their dead*, i.e. the one the *Bodies*, the other the *separated Souls* kept there, that both being reunited may stand at his final *Barr*, Rev. 20. 13.

It remains only

Thirdly to shew, that this *Power* of our Blessed Saviour over the *unseen World* and over *Death*, is the *Reward* of his *dying for us*.

And this is intimated to us in the *Connexion* of these words with the preceding, *I am he that lives and was dead*; and behold *I live for evermore*, and have the *keys of the unseen World* and of *Death*. That he now *lives for ever* invested with this transcendent power

is the consequent of his *being dead*. And this Truth is in other passages of Scripture more expressly asserted. It was on the Account of his *taking on him the Form of a Servant, and appearing in the likeness of sinful flesh, his becoming therein obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross* (that most ignominious and painful Death) That God has now highly exalted him, and given him a Name above every Name, to which all in Heaven and Earth and under the Earth must bow in acknowledgment of his Dominion, Phil. 2. 7, 8, 9 &c. It was in consideration of those reproachful Sufferings he so freely underwent, that he is now crowned with this unconceivable Glory and Honour, Heb. 2. 9. And indeed It was highly congruous to the Wisdom of God, that he who thus voluntarily humbled himself shou'd be thus eminently Exalted, Luk. 18. 4. That as in him the divine Nature and Life appear'd most remarkably clouded with Infirmities and Miseries, with Reproach and Shame, in him also it shou'd appear most resplendent with the brightest Rays of Dignity and Power. It was no less agreeable

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to the Divine Wisdom, that as *Devils* and *wicked Men* have their *Head* and *Leader*, *Holy Angels* and *Good Men* shou'd have *theirs*. And that as the *Prince of Devils* gain'd his *Auhority* by *Rebellion* and *Pride*, The *Son of God* shou'd be advanc'd to *His* as the *Reward* of his *Obedience* and *Humility*. And sure it was most unexceptionably equal, that he shou'd be particularly the *Head* and *Lord* of *those* whom he has *Redeemed* and *Purchased* at so dear *Expence*.

It now remains that we apply the whole. And,

I. *Was he that Lives Dead?* O let us herein Adore the marvellous Condescension of the Son of God:

For it was entirely on our Account that he *Died*, and did thus forego that Immortality that wou'd have otherwise been the rightful Priviledge of his Innocent Nature, according to the Original Law given to it. And truly when on *the one hand*, we duly consider what poor despicable Worms *We* are, unworthy of his notice and regard, nay perverse Enemies and Rebels that deserv'd his Abhorrence and Displeasure; And when we consider on *the other hand* the

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Dignity of the *Eternal Word* Taberna-
cling in our *Flesh*, we cannot sufficient-
ly admire this instance of unparallel'd
Pity, That the *Prince of Life* and
Lord of Glory shou'd for our Sakes and
in our Place & Stead, thus submit to the
most Ignominious and Accursed Death.
Great indeed is the Mystery of *Godliness*
God manifest in our Flesh; but if possi-
ble, greater is the Mystery of his *Doing*
therein as the *Substitute* and *Sacrifice* of
condemned Rebels, as the *Propitiation*
for the *Sins of a guilty World*. O let
us then, as often as we are call'd, at the
Table of the Lord, to behold the live-
ly Representation and Effigies of him-
self *as Dead*, raise up our Hearts to
the most adoring Thoughts of the un-
conceivable height and depth, length and
breadth of matchless Love therein ex-
press'd to us, which far surpasses our
(adequate) Knowledge. Let this Lan-
guage endear him to us, *I am he that*
Live's and was Dead. But,

II. Do's *he that was Dead now Live*
for Evermore; And has he now the
Keys of the Unseen World and of Death?
Let the Consideration hereof be matter
of abundant Satisfaction and Joy to
us. *Zz 4* It

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It ought to be so both *on His account* and *on our own*.

1. It shou'd be so on His account.

If we have any ingenuous Sense of that amazing Condescension of Divine Love which the Son of God express'd in *Dying for us*, we cannot but *Congratulate* his being *rais'd* not only to a State of *Immortality* but a State of such *Supereminent Dignity and Glory*. It shou'd be matter of our most Delightful Contemplation, that he who here Died for us on an *infamous Cross* is now *Rais'd* to so *Illustrious a Throne*. That that *Head* which in Contempt was here *Crown'd with Thorns*, now wears a *brighter Diadem* than any of the *Heavenly Principalities and Powers* (those *Thrones and Dominions* themselves being now subjected to him.) That he who seem'd here *insulted over* by the *Powers of Hell*, and by a *Malignant World*, has now *Devils and damned Spirits* in his *Chains*, and under the absolute Controul of his sovereign Providence. That he who for the *Advancement of God's Kingdom* was made such a spectacle of *Misery and Contempt* in this *visible World*, is now the *Lord of the Invisible State*, and has the right-ful

ful Disposal of the Condition and Lot of all that pass into it. That he who came on the merciful Design of unveiling to us the unseen World, and declaring the terms of our endless Happiness or Misery there, is empower'd to dispense those vast *Rewards* or *Punishments*, accordingly as those his declared terms are or are not sincerely comply'd with. That he who freely *layd down his Life for us*, shou'd as *Lord of the Quick and Dead* have the power to dispose of *our's* ! And that he who for our Sakes submitted to Death and conquer'd it, shou'd have the *Keys of Death*, by which he can *open the Grave*, and conferr upon his sincere Followers a *blessed Immortality*. How shou'd the remembrance of his former *Abasement* raise our Souls to the most thankful Exultation in his present *Advancement* ! How shou'd we Admire and Applaud the wise Counsels and Contrivance of Divine Wisdom in so suitable a Reward of our Saviour's eminent Obedience and Sufferings.

2. Nay this ought to be matter of the highest Joy and Satisfaction to us on our *own account*. And that in several respects

spects which I can only briefly suggest. As,

I. That *Our Blessed Lord who was Dead now Lives for Evermore*, gives us the fullest Assurance, that his Death is an effectual means to attain all the great Ends for which He submitted to Die.

Had not his Sufferings and Death been a sufficient Expiation of the Guilt of Sin; Had they not fully repair'd the honour of God's injur'd Justice, and secur'd the great Ends of his wise Government; Had they not been a valuable consideration and price to obtain our Eternal Redemption, Our Blessed Lord had still continued the *Captive of Death*, and cou'd never have thus Triumph'd in his Victory over it. If the Debt of Punishment had not been fully paid which the Divine Wisdom & Justice requir'd, he had never been discharg'd from the arrest of Justice, and releas'd from the Bonds of Death. But having now made a plenary Satisfaction, even God the Righteous Judge has testify'd his Acceptance of it by *raising him from the Dead*, and has thereby declar'd himself to be now to all returning Sinners

ners the God of Peace. And our Blessed Saviour having by Death conquer'd Death and Hell, does now live for ever, as the powerful Intercessor and Advocate of all that come to God by him, being fully empower'd to bestow the Blessings he had purchas'd for us; So that he appears now every way able to save to the uttermost, Heb. 7. 25.

2, Again, That Christ lives for evermore and has now the power of the Unseen World and Death, gives us the highest Assurance of his being capable to carry on successfully the great design of our Salvation here, and to compleat it at last.

It gives us the highest Assurance that he is capable to carry on the great Design of our Salvation here.

Do's he live for ever, and that as our Intercessor in Heaven, he is then always capable to recommend all our Services, and all our Prayers to the Audience and Acceptance of his Heavenly Father. He is then capable to wash our guilty Souls in the Laver of his precious Blood, and by that prevalent Plea to obtain all that renewed Pardon and Forgiveness, which our daily Offences make us stand in

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in so Infinite need of. So that we may justly Triumph with the Apostle, *Who shall Condemn? It is Christ that dyed; nay rather that is now risen again, and who is at the right Hand of God, and there makes Intercession for us*, Rom. 8. 34. Do's he live for evermore? How capable then is he of maintaining and increasing our spiritual Life by the constant Communications and Influences of his quickning Spirit? How easily can our glorious Head diffuse vital Spirits to all the Members of his mystical Body for their spiritual Nourishment and Growth? So that of his Fulness we may receive Grace for Grace, and because he lives, we shall also live, and that Abundantly? John 10. 10.

Nay this gives us the highest Assurance that he is capable of compleating our Salvation at last.

He that has the *Keys* of the *invisible World* can receive our departing Souls, and secure their happy Entrance into the Mansions of Glory. He that Commands all the *Host of Angels*, can appoint a powerful *Guard* of 'em to secure our safe Passage thro' this lower Region of the Air (the present *Territory* of

of the Powers of Darkneſs) till we arrive at the ſuperior Regions of the Bleſſed. And by him our particular Lot and Station in that *unſeen State* ſhall be assigned. So that he is capable of performing all he has promis'd concerning our reception into his Preſence and into thoſe Mansions which are prepared for us in his Father's Houſe. And tho' our Bodies may be for ſome time detain'd in the Power of the Grave, yet he has the Keys of Death; and can when his appointed Time is come, unlock the Doors of thoſe *Earthly Dormitories*, and awaken our ſleeping duſt there. He can as eaſily by his commanding Voice looſe the bands of Death in which all Mankind are held, as he did once thoſe of *Lazarus*. And we ſhall as readily Obey as he, who as ſoon as our Lord ſaid, *Lazarus come forth*, immediately came forth, tho' bound Hand and Foot, John 11. 44. He that has himſelf conquer'd Death can and will then entirely Aboliſh it; ſo that Death ſhall be abſolutely Swallow'd up in endleſs Life.

3. Again, That our Lord Jeſus thus lives for evermore, having this Dominion over the *unſeen World* and over Death, ſhou'd

shou'd be matter of Joy to us, as in him we see our own Nature advanc'd to the highest Dignity and Glory. For this *Lord of the invisible World* has carried our *human Nature* into those highest Heavens, and lives as *God-Man* there forever. And as *God-man* and our Mediator he is invest'd with this transcendent *Ministerial Authority* in order to his prosecuting and compleating the grand Designs of his Mediatory Kingdom, to the Glory of the Father, and the Salvation of his Church. With what Satisfaction then shou'd we behold those bright Rays of Glory wherewith our Nature shines by vertue of it's Union to the Eternal Word! But,

III. This Description of our B. Saviour represents him as a most deserving Object of our Esteem, our Reverence and Subjection, our Faith and Trust.

1. He is a most deserving Object of our highest *Esteem and Veneration*.

For how illustrious do's this Character represent him, *That he Lives for Evermore, and has the Keys of the Unseen World and of Death!*

How vast and Universal is his Dominion that has thus all Power not on-

ly in *Earth* but in *Heaven* also committed to him? How *Extensive* is his *Authority* that thus reaches to *both Worlds*. In *this World*, all *men* are his *Subjects* by *Right* and *Obligation*; All called *Christians* are so by *publick Profession*; All *sincere Christians* by *cordial Consent*. Nay all *Christian Magistrates* are as truly his *deputed Officers*, in reference to the *Power of the Sword*, as *Ministers* in reference to *that of the Word*. If we look up to the *other World*, How *spacious* are the *Regions* in which he there presides! And if this *dull Earth* which is the *sediment* of the *Creation*, be so full of *Vitality*, so abundantly *Replenish'd* with living *Inhabitants*, shall we think those *Immense Regions* above a *solitary uninhabited Desert*? Or may we not far more reasonably conjecture, that they as far transcend this *despicable spot* in the *number of glorious Inhabitants*, as they do in *External Brightness* and *Splendour*? How amazingly great and large then are the *unseen Territories* in which our *Saviour* exercises this *ministerial Authority*! Him all the *Host of Angels Adore* and *Serve*; Before him *Devils tremble* and *crouch*:
By

By his particular Sentence, all *dislodged Souls* are disposed into the *upper* or *lower* Regions of the vast *unseen World*, into the *Regions of Light*, or *Territories* and *Abyss of Darkneß* : And at his powerful final Summons the *Gates of Death* shall be *unlock'd*, the *Graves open'd*, and the *Bodies* that sleep there, recover'd to endless Life. O what admiring Thoughts shou'd we entertain concerning the *Majesty*, the *Grandeur*, and the unbounded *Authority* of our exalted Saviour ! How humbly shou'd we join with all in *Earth and Heaven* in *bowing the Knee to him*, and in *confessing him to be Lord*, to the *Glory of the Father* ! Phil. 2. 9, 10. &c.

Nay from this Character we may also infer,

2. That he is the most deserving Object of our *Subjection* and *Reverence*.

He that is the *Lord of the Invisible*, is much more the rightful *Lord* of this lower *visible World*. He that can Command *Angels themselves* has a much more Evident and Undeniable Claim to the Service of *Men*. For he took *on him the Nature of Angels*, but *not the Seed of Abraham*, Heb. 2. 16. He

became partaker of our *Flesh and Blood*, and therefore *died for us*, and rose again that he might be the *Lord of the living and the dead*. So that he has now a sovereign Right to us by virtue of his *Redemption* of us. We are his *rightful Subjects* as we are his *purchased Possession*.

O let us then reverence his Authority as our exalted Prince and Saviour. Let us freely give up our selves to *him* and to the *Father* by him. Let us voluntarily put our Necks under his Yoke, and become his *willing People in the day of his mighty Power*, Ps. 110. 3. Let us cheerfully recognize and own his Authority over us. Let us cordially devote our selves to his faithful perpetual Service. Let us resolutely engage in a course of unfeigned Obedience to him.

And it shou'd effectually induce us thereto, when we consider, That as he has so unquestionable a Right to our *Subjection and Service*, so he is capable to *Reward or Punish* us as we become his *Obedient Subjects*, or continue *obstinate Rebels* against his Authority. He has the *Keys of the Unseen World*, even of *Hell* it self. So that as he can

abundantly *recompense* our *Fidelity*, by admitting our dislodged Souls into the *Regions of Light and Life*, so he can *avenge* our *impersuasibleness* and perverse refusal of his Government, by sending 'em to the *infernal and dark Abyss*, the place of *Horror and Torment*. How then shou'd we revere his Authority and Power, into whose Hands and Disposal we must so certainly fall ! How shou'd we *open our Hearts* and give him admission into 'em, who now *Knocks* there by the Calls of his Gospel, and the *Solicitations* of his Holy Spirit, as ever we expect he shou'd *open to us* the *door* of the *Celestial Paradise*, and the *Gate* of the *Heavenly Jerusalem* !

And we are concern'd to do this the more speedily, because he has the *Key of Death*, and can by the *turning of that* put an end when he pleases to our *day of Grace*, by putting an end to our natural Life. How dangerous is it then to put off his importunate renewed Calls with tedious *Excuses and Delays*, who can so soon, even whenever he sees fit, *turn us out* of this *visible*, into the vast *Unseen World*, and change our *State of Trial*
for

for a *State of final Retribution*! It depends on His Pleasure, how long our Space of Repentance and Time of Preparation for Eternity shall last; How many more Invitations and Calls shall be yet tendred to us; And it were most inexcusable Folly to trifle and dally with him, who need's do no more than *turn this Key of Death*, and our Souls *prepar'd* or *unprepar'd* must dislodge and pass into an Unseen Eternal State.

Nay this Character shews us,

3. That he is a most deserving Object of our *Faith* and *Trust*.

What just ground have we (supposing that we have sincerely given up our selves to him) to depend on him for our continued Pardon and Peace with God, who was *Dead* indeed (having undertaken to redeem our forfeited Life by the ransom of his own) but is now *Alive*, and *live's for evermore*! What great reason have we to rely on him, for all necessary supplies of Grace, in order to our Growth and Progress in spiritual Life towards the perfection of Life Eternal, who is now the *Exalted* and *Living Head* of his Church, and the never fading *Root* of Divine Life to it!

What ground have we to expect the gracious Acceptance of all our unfeigned Homage and Worship, Obedience and Service, who have such an Ever-living Mediator that always *appears in the Divine Presence for us* ! Nay with what confidence may we *Commend* our departing Spirits into the merciful Hands of our Blessed Redeemer, when we know, that as *he has the Keys of Death*, and will not therefore translate us from this World till his Grace has prepared us for a better, so *he has the Keys of the Unseen World*, and will appoint us our *Lot and Place* there ! How chearfully then may we *consign* those *departing Souls* into his *Disposal*, which we have now *committed* as a *Trust* to his gracious *Care*, as expecting he will effectually provide for their *Safety* and *Happiness* in that unknown State they are entering into. Nay how assuredly may we expect the glorious Restoration of our Bodies themselves from him that has the *Keys of Death*, and can therefore easily open the Doors of the Grave ?

IV. We may hence infer, How awful a thing it is to pass from hence by Death into the Unseen World. For

For it is here mention'd as an Instance of the eminent Authority of our Blessed Saviour, that he has such a Dominion over the *Unseen World*, and over this *Entrance* into it. None pass thro' the *one* to the *other* without his *judicial Appointment* and *Decision*. But of that I may have occasion to speak more from another Subject.

V. Hence we may infer the unspeakable Happiness of those that are interested in this Blessed Saviour, and the Misery of those that are not.

The *former* are not only secure of the *Efficacy* of his present *Mediation* and *Grace* to carry on the great Design of their Salvation, but have the most comfortable Prospect of the *final Consummation* of it. *Life* and *Death* are both *theirs*, as being in his Dispose who will order and over-rule 'em for their Eternal Good. So are *Things present*, and which is far more, *Things to come*; I mean the grand Events and Concerns of the future Unseen World. They not only *live to Christ*, but *dye in him*, even *into his gracious Hands*, to whom the Power is entrusted of determining their unchangeable State, and the Place of their Eternal

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Abode. They fall by Death into his Disposal who *has the Key of the Celestial House*, and can so open that none shall be able to shut it, and who has assur'd 'em, that *where he is, they shall also be.*

For the latter, viz. Those Impenitent Sinners that have no Interest in this Blessed Saviour, their Condition is most Miserable: Not only are they *Condemned* already (by the virtual Sentence of God's Holy Law) Not only *do's the Wrath of God now abide on'em*, but they are remedilessly expos'd to that more *Terrible Vengeance* which the Gospel denounces against the *Neglecters of it's great Salvation*: And O how dismal is their Case that must appear before a Just and Sin-avenging God, without any *Advocate* or *Mediator* to plead their guilty Cause, and Interpose between them, and that tremendous Justice of his, which is a *consuming Fire*! Nay how deplorable and forlorn is the Case of those that must fall into his Hands as their *Righteous Judge*, whose marvellous Love they have Despis'd whose just Authority and Laws they have trampled on, and whose invaluable Offers of Mercy they have slighted

ted and refused! What can they expect from an abused and affronted Saviour, but that awful Doom, *those mine Enemies that wou'd not that I shou'd reign over 'em, bring 'em before me and Slay 'em!*

With what Consternation and Horror will they find themselves under his decisive Authority and Power, as their avenging Judge, whose Bowels of Pity they have spurn'd at, when he wou'd have been their merciful Saviour! How will they look on him *whom they have peirc'd by their Sins, especially by their Impenitency and Ingratitude, and wail at the sight of him, when he shall come in Flaming Fire to execute Vengeance on them that knew not God, and obey'd not his Gospel!* How will it heighten their amazement and despair to have their terrible Sentence of *Condemnation* pronounc'd by the Mouth of an *incensed Redeemer*, and to be *adjudg'd to Hell* by him, that in vain offer'd and attempted to *restore 'em to Heaven.*

F I N I S.

THE
OFFICE
OF A

Scriptural Bishop

Describ'd and Recommended,

From 1 Tim. Chap. III. Vers. 1

An Ordination

SERMON.

By J. B.

Printed in the YEAR, 1708.

OFFICE
OF A

Supplies Bishop

Unsettled and Recommended

From a



of the

SECRET

BY J. B.

Printed in the Year 1703.

The OFFICE of a
Scriptural Bishop :
A
SERMON, &c.

1 Tim. Chap. 3. Vers. 1.

*This is a true Saying, If a Man
desire the Office of a Bishop, he de-
sires a good VWork.*

IN order to a Man's regularly aspi-
ring to, and faithfully discharging
the important Duties of a *Scriptu-
ral Bishop*, 'tis highly requisite he shou'd
understand and consider the *Extent* of
his Sacred Office, that his *Diligence*
may bear some proportion to the *great-
ness* and the *difficulty* of his *Work*.
And those that come under his Pastoral
Inspection and Care are as much con-
cern'd to consider the *Excellent Design*
and

and *Beneficial Tendency* of that holy *Function*, that they may (according to the *Apostle's* Injunction) *know such as labour among 'em and are over 'em in the Lord, and may esteem 'em very highly in Love for their Works sake,* 1 *Thess.* 5. 12, 13, &c. And accordingly the Words I have read will give me very proper occasion to treat on both these Heads, and to apply my self both to *Pastors* and to their *Flocks*.

The *Apostle* designing in the verses following my Text, to lay down the *Characters* that are requisite in all those that were to be *chosen* and *constituted* as *Bishops* or *Deacons* in the *Christian Church*, he preface's his *Characters* of a *Christian Bishop* with this remarkable commendation of his *Office*. *He that desire's the Office of a Bishop desire's a good Work.* And this passage he introduces with a particular solemnity not unusual with him when he delivers any Truth of great Moment and Weight, and which deserves our most attentive Consideration. *This is a true Saying, if any Man desire, &c.* (See the like Preface to other Important Truths, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. 1 *Tim.* 4. 9. 2 *Tim.*

2 Tim. 2. 11.) He call's it a *true Saying*, because at first View it might appear to be a *Paradox*. *Civil Offices* among Men are wont to be sought with an eager *Ambition*, and to be very *forward* in aspiring to 'em is no great mark of a *virtuous Disposition*. They are often (when attended with great *Honour* and *Profit*) most restlessly sought by those that deserve 'em least. But here the Apostle proposes this *Sacred Office* as the noble Object of a most regular and commendable *Ambition*. For if a Man truly understand what the *Office* itself obliges him to, and what eminent *Labour* and *Patience* and *Self-denyal* are requisite to *discharge it aright*, He can have no *Temptation* to covet so painful a Work; and nothing but an ardent desire of the *Glory of God* and the *Salvation of Souls* can make him *willing* to undertake it. And indeed all those had need to take a right and accurate View of it, that wou'd approve the *Sincerity* of their Intentions in aspiring to it, to the Eye of an heart-searching God.

I shall therefore in treating on this remarkable *Saying* of the Apostle.

I. Consider what *the Office of a Bishop* is, which he here commends as the *Object* of a most laudable *Ambition*.

II. I shall shew, that 'tis a *Work* that requires the most laborious *Diligence*, and yet a *good* (or *Excellent*) *Work*, highly *beneficial* to others, and *Honourable* to the *Person himself*.

And,

Lastly, I shall *Apply* my self both to such as *undertake* the *Office* and *Work*, and those that *Enjoy* the *Benefit* of their laborious *Inspection* and *Care*.

I. I shall consider what *the Office of a scriptural Bishop* is, which the Apostle commends as the *Object* of a most laudable *Ambition*.

And here I am sensible that I not only enter on a controverted Subject, but must treat of it with great Disadvantage. Long Custom for many Ages has affix'd those Ideas to the *Name* of a *Bishop*, which were wholly unknown in the Apostle's time, when these sacred Writings were Penn'd. And indeed if the *bishoprick* or *episcopacy* the Apostle speak's of were the same thing that too many of those apprehend it to be, who most vehemently

hemently aspire to it, *viz.* A grand and pompous *Sine-cure*, a *Domination* over all the *Churches* and *Ministers* in a large District manag'd by others as his *Delegates*, but requiring little Labour of a Man's own, and all this supported by large *Revenues*, and attended with considerable *secular Honours*; I say, if the *Bishoprick* the Apostle speaks of were no other than this, I shou'd despair of being able to vindicate the *Truth* of this *Saying*. We must not therefore bring our own preconceiv'd Opinion of the *Bishop's Office* to the Holy Scriptures, but borrow our Notion of it from thence; and then I doubt not you'll easily see and acknowledge the *Truth* of what the Apostle speaks concerning it, *That whoever desire's it, desire's a good Work.*

Accordingly In speaking of the *Office* of a *Scriptural Bishop*, I shall;

First consider the *Object* of his *Inspection* and *Care*

Secondly, The several *Branches* of his *Office*.

First, Let us consider the *Object* of a *Scriptural Bishop's Inspection* and *Care*.

A *Bishop* being the same thing as an *Inspector* or *Overseer*, it will greatly tend to clear the Nature of his *Office*, to consider *Whom* he is represented in Scripture, as taking the *Charge* and *Over-sight* of. And if we take an impartial View of all those passages wherein *Bishops* are mentioned in Scripture, I doubt not we shall find that a particular Church was the proper Object of a *Bishop's* Inspection and Care. It was a particular Flock he was to *Oversee*, to *Feed* and *Rule*, and that usually in conjunction with several others as his *Colleagues* in the same *Office* and *Charge*.

The first Express mention we have of *Bishops* is in that noted Passage, Acts 20. 28. We read at verse 16, 17, &c. That the *Apostle Paul* hastning to *Jerusalem*, where he designed if possible to be at the *Day of Pentecost*, sent from *Miletus* to *Ephesus*, and called the *Elders* of the Church. And these *Elders* he exhorts at verse 28. To take heed to themselves and to all the Flock, over the which the *Holy Ghost* had made 'em *Bishops*, to feed the Church of God which he had purchased with his own Blood.

Here

Here we not only see the Truth of what *Chrysostom*, *Jerom*, *Theodore*, *Occumentus* and *Theophylact* Observe, That the *same Persons* were in Scripture call'd indifferently *Elders* and *Bishops*; *Bishops* from their Office of *Inspecting* and *Feeding* the Flock, and *Elders* from their *Age* and *Authority*; But we also see what was the *Object* of the oversight and care of these *Bishops*, that *Flock*, that *Church of God* that was then gather'd in the City of *Ephesus*. I know indeed the Learned *Dr. Hammond* pretends here, that the *Church of God* includes all the *Apostle* had converted in *Asia*, and so included many particular Churches, and that the *Elders* sent for to *Ephesus* were so many *Bishops of Asia*, in the modern Sense. But the weakness of this pretence plainly appears from the Text which expressly saith, that the *Apostle* sent for the *Elders of the Church of Ephesus*, not for those of *Asia*. That his haste in going to *Jerusalem* wou'd not permit the sending to all the parts of *Asia*, to gather together so many *Bishops* in the Modern sense to meet him at *Miletus*, unless we suppose the greatest part of 'em to have

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been

been scandalous *Non-residents*, and to have learn'd the Modern practice of spending the greatest part of their Time out of their own *Diocess*, and at a distance from their pretended *Charge*. Besides, the *Christian Congregations* dispers'd thro' a large *Province* are never in Scripture called a *Church* in the singular, but always *Churches* in the plural Number. As we read of the *Churches of Asia*, 1 Cor. 16. 19. *The Churches of Macedonia*, 2 Cor. 8. 1. *The Churches of Galatia*, Gal. 1. 2. And this is the more confirm'd by what we read elsewhere in this Book of the *Acts*, viz. That wherever *Paul* and *Barnabas* planted Christian *Churches*, *They ordained Elders in every Church* [*καὶ ἐξέταξαν.*] And here we find these *Elders* in the *Church of Ephesus*; the *Bishops* or *Inspectors* of the *Flock of God* there.

Again, The next express mention we find of *Bishops* is in the Apostle's Inscription of his Epistle to the *Saints at Philippi*, *Paul and Timotheus the Servants of Christ, to all the Saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons*, Phil. 1. 1. And here

here we plainly see, that *the Object* of the Inspection and Care of these *Bishops* were the *Saints at Philippi*. They were the *Flock* whom these *Bishops* were oblig'd to Feed, and whom these *Deacons* assisted in taking care of the Poor, and *serving Tables* among 'em. As for Dr. Hammond's Pretence, that *Philippi* was the *Metropolis* of *Macedonia*; and therefore *many Bishops* in the modern sense might be present there under the *Metropolitan* of *Philippi*, nothing can be more destitute of the least probability: For not to mention the concurrent Judgment of most of the Fathers, that these *Bishops* were no other than the *Presbyters* or *Elders* of the Church of *Philippi*, and that *Theffalonica* and not *Philippi* was the *Metropolis* of *Macedonia*; 'Tis sufficient to suggest, that such pompous *Titles* as those of *Provincial* and *Metropolitan Bishops* were very remote from the *Simplicity* and *Humility* of the *Apostolical Age*. And the Text it self refutes these Pretensions. For the Apostle Writes to no other *Bishops* and *Deacons* but what were at *Philippi* with the *Saints* there, and has not one word of the *Bishops* and *Deacons*

throughout all Macedonia. And *asevery single Church* had several *Deacons*, so it had several *Bishops* appointed to take the oversight of it.

The next express mention of a *Bishop* is in my Text and the following Verses. And from the 5th Verse we may see what was *the Object* of the *Bishop's Care*, viz. *The Church of God*, (i. e. that particular Church that was committed to his Care) *If a Man know not how to Rule his own House, how shall he take care of the Church of God?* 'Tis that Church which is distinguish'd from those that Rule in it, and in the management of the Affairs whereof the *Deacon* was to be an *Assistant Officer*, that this *Scriptural Bishop* was to Employ his faithful Labours and Care in.

The next express mention we have of a *Bishop* is in the Epistle to *Titus*, where he is represented as one of those *Elders* which *Titus* was to ordain in every *City (or Town)* of *Creet*, to take care of the particular Churches that were planted in 'em. For the Apostle giving there this Character of such an *Elder*, that *he must be blameless*, suggests this Reason for it, *For a Bishop*

Shop must be blameless as the Steward of God. For which Inference there were no ground if an *Elder* and *Bishop* were not different Titles of the same Office. Every City or Town then, in which a *Christian Church* was planted, was to have it's *Elders* or *Bishops* constituted as God's *Stewards* in that part of his *House and Family*.

And to add no more, when the Apostle Peter addresse's himself to the *Elders* of the several Churches scattered thro' *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*, he charges 'em to feed the Flock of God among 'em, taking the oversight thereof, [*ἐπιμενεῖν*] or acting the part of *Bishops* towards it. Every particular Church of God, was as one of his Lots (see 1. Pet. 5. 3 *τῆς κληρονομίας*) The Expression contains an Allusion to the Land of *Canaan*, the particular *Inheritances* whereof were divided by Lot. So are particular Churches as so many Possessions or Lots in God's Heritage or Universal Church. And the *Elders* plac'd in each Lot were to take a particular Inspection and Care thereof. And the Object of their Care was the Flock of God among 'em (i. e.

with whom they did daily reside and converse, to whom they were capable of being *Examples*) whereas they cou'd not feed those *Flocks* with whom they *seldom* or *never* once *Convers'd*; nor be *Examples* to many *Thousands* that never *saw* their *Faces*, nor had any *Opportunity* to *know* or *observe* their holy and blameless *Conversation*.

These are all the places I remember where *Bishops* are expressly *mention'd*; to which I shall only subjoyn *two* more where they are plainly *intended*, tho' under other *Titles*, and where the *Object* of their *Inspection* and *Care* is manifestly describ'd as *the same*.

The *one* is, 1 *Thes.* 5. 12, 13. Where the *Apostle* writing to the *Church of the Thessalonians*, beleeches 'em, To *know* those that labour'd among 'em, and were over 'em in the *Lord*, and admonish'd 'em, and to Esteem 'em very highly in *Love* for their *Work's sake*. No doubt this *Church of Thessalonica* had its *Bishops* and *Deacons* as well as that at *Philippi*, and the *Duties* here mention'd are such as might be easily paid by a particular *Christian Church* to their *Pastors*, but cou'd never be paid by many

many Scores or Hundreds of Churches to one Pastor. How shou'd those Esteem him highly for his Work's sake, who perhaps never heard him Preach, and never enjoy'd any of his Labours? How shou'd he admonish all those, of whom he scarce knows the Ten Thousandth Man, and to whose Case and Conversation he is for the most part an entire Stranger? If then the Presidents of this particular Church were Scriptural Bishops, we see what their Charge was.

The other Passage is in, Heb. 13. 17. Where the Apostle exhorts 'em to Obey those that rul'd over 'em, (or 'their Guides) [*ἡγουμένων*] For (saith he) they watch for your Souls, as those that must give an Account. And sure if a Man must undertake the Care of no more Soul than he may be able to watch over, in order to his giving an account of 'em, we may easily conclude that he will never take all the Souls in a numerous Modern Diocess for the Objects of his Inspection and Care, if ever he expect to give up his Account with any Comfort or Hope. He will rather think the Souls of a numerous Congregation a heavy

Weight, and be under very anxious Thoughts lest many of them shoud miscarry for want of his *vigilance* and *care*.

'Tis indeed true, That in the *Postscripts* to the *second Epistle to Timothy*, and that to *Titus*, the *one* is mention'd as *ordain'd the first Bishop of the Church of the Ephesians*, and the *latter* as *Ordain'd the first Bishop of the Church of the Cretians*. But those *Postscripts* (as all Learned Men know) are of no Authority. The Name of *Phrygia Pacatiana*, at the End of the *first Epistle to Timothy*, was not in use 'till the declining Time of the *Roman Empire*. The Words in the *Postscript* of the *second Epistle to Timothy*, *first Ordain'd Bishop*, &c. are not, as *Beza* observes, found in the *Ancient Copies*, nor in the *Syriack Version*. And the *Epistle to Titus* was not, as the *Postscript* saith, *Written from Nicopolis*, for then the Apostle, Cap. 3. 12. wou'd have said, *I have determin'd to Winter here, and not there*. These two Persons therefore were not, in the Scriptural Sense of the Word, *Bishops* but *Evangelists*, (as *Timothy* is expressly call'd, 2 *Tim.* 4. 5.) Now the Office of E-
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Evangelists was not confin'd to any particular Flock or Charge, no more than that of the *Apostles*; They were deputed by Them to plant Churches, or visit the Churches that were already planted, and to give Directions and Orders to those Elders or Bishops which they had set over 'em : And therefore these *Evangelists* have no where the Title of Bishops given 'em in Scripture. They were indeed Styl'd Bishops by some *Historians* of the succeeding Ages, when the Name of Bishop and Elder begun to be distinguish'd, but it was by the same gross impropriety of Speech as the Apostle *Peter* was call'd Bishop of Rome, and the Apostle *James*, Bishop of Jerusalem, whereby they as little consulted the extent of their *Apostolical Office* and Dignity as in our Modern Language he wou'd consult the Dignity of a *Diocesan Prelate*, that shou'd Entitle him the Curate of a Country-Village. But of this I may have occasion to speak more afterwards.

Upon the whole, we never once read in Scripture of those called *Elders* or *Ministers of the Gospel*, as any part of the *Scriptural Bishops Charge*. They are

are no where mentioned as *subjected to his Authority*, or *deriving their Ministerial Power from him*, and *exercising it in subordination to him as their Superior or Governour*. The Scriptures do indeed suppose these *Scriptural Bishops* to have been under the Direction of the *Apostles*, and those *Evangelists* whom they employed in the Settlement of the Churches they planted, but never suppose the *Presbyters* to be under *theirs*. On the contrary, the *Office* as well as *Name of Elders and Bishops* was then the same, and a *Christian Flock or Church* was the *Object* of their *joint Inspection and Care* : And there seems to be this obvious Reason, why the Apostle ordain'd *several* such *Elders or Bishops* in every *Christian Church* they Planted, not only for the benefit of those *particular Churches* themselves, but for the speedier propagation of *Christianity* round about 'em. And especially, that there might be in every such *Church* a *Seminary of Pastors* fit to take the care of *new Churches*, when the larger diffusion of the Gospel and Conversion of Infidels might give a proper occasion to *Erect* 'em.

I have resolv'd to confine my self to the *Holy Scriptures*, or else it were not difficult to shew that even when the name of *Bishop* and *Elder* came to be *Distinguish'd*, the *Bishop* was no more for some considerable time, than the *Senior Pastor* of a particular *Flock* or *Congregation*, which he govern'd in conjunction with the rest of the *Elders* of it. Such the *Bishop* of *Ignatius* appears to be, notwithstanding all the magnifying Expressions he use's to distinguish him from, and give him the preference before the rest of the *Presbyters*. A Church was [*Plebs Episcopo coadunata.*] a *Christian Flock United to their Bishop*. And every *Bishop* had one *Altar* or *Communion Table* for that one *Flock*. There is (saith *Ignatius*) to every Church one *Altar* and one *Bishop*, together with the *Elders* and *Deacons*. And this *Primacy of Order* which the *Eldest Presbyter* first claim'd on the account of *Seniority*, was after given upon the *People's Election*, and rather with a regard to *Merit* and *Abilities* than *meer Seniority*, but without any real *Distinction of Office*. But to treat this Matter fully and set it in a true Light, wou'd require a *Volumn* rather than a *Sermon*.

I shall therefore now proceed,
Secondly, To consider the several
Franches of a *Scriptural Bishop's Of-*
fice.

And of these I will mention the *Prin-*
cipal with all the brevity I can.

That a *Scriptural Bishop* was to *Teach*
or *Instruct* his Flock in the Principles
of the Christian Religion, delivering
to 'em God's holy *Truths* and *Laws*,
will be easily granted. 'Tis to qualify
him for this part of his Work, that the
Apostle makes this one part of his *Cha-*
rafter, that he shou'd be [*διδασκων*] *apt to*
Teach, Vers. 2. Nay he must not only be
a *Teacher* but a *Defender* of the Christi-
an Faith, in order to the *convincing* of
gain-Sayers. He must *behave himself in*
the House of God as a Buttress and Pil-
lar of Truth. (For these Words shou'd
be apply'd to *Timothy*, not to the Church
which is the *House of God* it self, and
not a *Pillar* in it, 1 Tim. 3. 15.)

Again, A *Scriptural Bishop* must be
the *Guide of his Flock* in all Acts of *pu-*
blick Worship and *Devotion*. He must
be their *Mouth* in *Prayer* and *Praise* to
God, as well as *his Mouth* to them in
his *publick Instructions*. He must Cele-
brate

brate among 'em all those Acts of *natural* and *instituted Worship*, all those *holy Ordinances* that tend to their Conversion to, or their Progress in a Life of *Faith* and *Holiness*, of *Heavenly Hope* and *Joy*. For these sacred *Institutions* are to the *Sheep* of *Christ* as the *Pastures* where they may *Feed* and *Rest*, and as the *gentle Streams* where they may find *Refreshment*. And the constant and regular *Administration* of 'em is one undoubted Instance of their *Feeding the Flock* committed to 'em.

Again, *A Scriptural Bishop* must *Rule the Flock* that he has the *Inspection* of.

And indeed this is an *essential branch* of his *Office*. His *Obligation* to feed 'em do's necessarily include an *Authority* to govern 'em by the *Administration* of sacred *Discipline*. The very Name of a *Pastor* carries *Authority* with it, and *sacred* as well as *civil Power* is frequently represented under this Metaphor of *Feeding*, to imply the *tender Affection* and *Care* that it shou'd be manag'd with. Accordingly 'tis one *Character* requisite in a *Scriptural Bishop*, that he shou'd *rule his own House well*, as being otherwise very unfit to be entrusted with the *care* of

of ruling the Church of God. He is constituted a *Steward in the House of God*, having the *Keys* thereof committed to him, to *admit* into it at first by *Baptism*, to *exclude* the openly Scandalous and Impenitent (whose *Example* wou'd endanger the *Infection* of others) and to restore such Offenders upon their credible Profession of Repentance to Church-Communion.

'Tis another part of his *Office* to be a *bright pattern* to his *Flock*,

He must therefore *take heed to himself* as well as to *them*, that his own *practice* may be conformable to his *Instructions*. And that those *Graces* and *Virtues* may be exemplify'd in his own *Life*, which he wou'd recommend by his *Doctrine*. And 'tis for that end the Apostle insists so much on a *Bishop's* being *blameless*, and free from all those scandalous Blemishes that might stain the Honour of his Profession, and blast the Success of his Labours. Those *Elders* whom the Apostle Peter beseeches to *Feed* and *Inspect* the *Flock of God* among 'em, he also urges to become *Ensamples* to it, 1 Pet. 5. 3. *Priests* under the Law were to have no remarkable *natural blemish*, and those under

under the Gospel shou'd have no notorious *moral blemish*. For such *vitious Priests* wou'd cause those *Offerings of the Lord to be abhorr'd* which they presented with their *unhallow'd Hands*. See *1 Sam. 2. 17.*

Again, 'Tis another *Branch* of the *Scriptural Bishop's Office*, Ministerially to *invest others in the same Office*, when any such *Occasion* offers.

Ordinis est Ordinare. The Power of *Ordination* (or of setting others apart to the Ministerial Office, by *Fasting and Prayer*, and *Imposition of Hands*) belongs to all who are themselves *Dignify'd* with it. This *Power* was in the *Apostle's Time* actually exercised both by those *extraordinary*, and those *ordinary Officers* that were *constituted* in the Church. Sometimes it was exercised by the *Apostles*, and such as were their *Fellow-Labourers* in their *unfixed Ministry*. Thus we read of *Saul and Barnabas*, that *They Ordain'd Elders in every Church*. Sometimes *Evangelists* were Employ'd; Thus *Titus* is Appointed by the *Apostle* to *Ordain Elders in every City in Crete*, *Tit. 1. 3.* And *Timothy* is here Instructed in the *Characters* of a *Scriptural Bishop*,

Bishop, that he might be cautious whom he set apart for that Office, and might not suddenly (and rashly) lay on Hands upon any, 1 Tim. 5. 22. At other times, we read of these scriptural Bishops or Elders employ'd in that Service : So they were in the Ordination of Timothy himself, tho' an Evangelist. As appears from that known Place, 1 Tim. 4. 14. Neglect not the Gift that is in thee which was given thee by Prophecy, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery. 'Tis true indeed, we are not by Gift to understand his Office of an Evangelist, but only some extraordinary Gift bestow'd upon him, when according to the Prophecies concerning him, he enter'd upon it. But that the Laying on of Hands do's referr to his Ordination to Office, is evident from the following Words, wherein the Apostle urges him to that Diligence and Fidelity in the Discharge of his Office, that was highly requisite to his Hearer's Salvation and his own. And we know that the Presbytery (or Bench of Elders) did not convey any extraordinary Gifts by Imposition of Hands : It was only for the Investing him in his sacred Office that they layd

'em upon him. Nay, tho' we Read else-
 where of the Apostle's *Laying his own
 Hands upon him* also, 2 Tim. 1. 6. yet
 this no way invalidates the Argument :
 For either the *Apostle's Imposition of
 Hands* was solely for *the conveyance of
 some extraordinary Gift*; or, if us'd for
*the conveyance of the Office of an Evan-
 gelist*, 'Tis evident that the *Hands of the
 Presbytery* were join'd with *his*. For
 which there were no just Ground if the
power of Ordination had not belong'd to
 them. Nor is this the only, tho' a very
 solid Evidence of *ordinary Ministers* be-
 ing Concern'd in such a *Solemnity*. For
 we Read of the *Teachers* as well as *Pro-
 phets* concurring to *sett apart Paul and
 Barnabas*, and that by *Fasting and Pray-
 er and Imposition of Hands, to the Work
 whereunto the Spirit of God had call'd
 'em*. And tho' I do not think This was
 in a strict sense an *Ordaining of 'em to
 the Apostolical Office* (for Paul was an
Apostle by an immediate Commission
 from Christ, and Barnabas was proba-
 bly an *Evangelist* before) yet it was a
*Separation of 'em for a special and emi-
 nent Service in the Exercise of their Mi-
 nistry*; And those that were empower'd

to send 'em forth in this solemn manner to such a *Work*, cou'd not want a Power to *ordain* any others to the Office of an *ordinary Pastor or Teacher*, which themselves were invested in. We may therefore justly reckon the power of giving such an *Ordinary Mission* to *Ordinary Officers* in the Church to belong to a *Scriptural Elder and Bishop*; and no human *Canons* can justly *debar* him from it.

And the *Reasonableness* of this Supposition is very obvious: For since all that the *Ordainers* have to do is the *Designation* of the Person whom *Christ* has *qualify'd* for the Office and *call'd* to it, and the *solemn Investiture* of him in it, Why shou'd not those that are already *Dignify'd* with the Office, and capable *Judges* of the *characters* that shou'd *qualify* him for it, be as capable of *Ministerially Investing him in it*? Why shou'd not the same *Commission* that Empowers Them to *preach the Gospel*, Empower 'em to *commit that Doctrine they preach to Faithful Men, that may Instruct others also*? If the *Apostle's Commission*, *Matth. 28. 19. 20.* Empower'd Them to *Ordain Others*, it do's also Empower all those

those *Ordinary Pastors* to do it, with whom Christ has promis'd His presence to the end of the World.

I know indeed, 'Tis confidently pretended, that the Apostle *Paul* Assign'd to *Timothy* and *Titus* such a *Superintendency* and *Care* over many Churches as *Diocesan Bishops* now claim; That he entrusted the sole power of *Ordination* with them; And that *Diocesan Bishops* are their only *Successors* in this Power; and consequently, the sole power both of *Church-Government* and *Ordination* is entail'd on *Them*, and their *Successors*; And no *Presbyters* can lay any claim to either, Their *Ordinations* being (say some) wholly null and invalid; or (as others say) grossly irregular and unwarrantable, and their *Acts of Church-Government* an *Usurpation* of a power that belongs not to 'em.

To this I shall only suggest the following particulars by way of Answer.

1. 'Tis granted that the *Apostles* did Exercise a general *Superintendency* and *Care* over all the Churches they Planted, and that the *Evangelists* were Employ'd by 'em as their *Assistants* therein. But,

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2. There is no Evidence from the H. Scriptures, of their having left any to succeed'em in this general Superintendency and Care.

No *Diocesan Bishops* ever pretended to such an unlimited Superintendency over all the Churches, as the Apostles actually Exercis'd, (except the late senseless Pretence of the *Roman Bishops*, founded on the Dream of St. Peter's Supremacy over the rest of the Apostles and their succeeding him therein) They have their Authority limited and bounded within certain precincts, beyond which they pretend not to Exert it. They have a certain definite Number of Churches and their Presbyters, as the Charge they suppose committed to 'em.

Nor do any *Diocesan Bishops* pretend to be such Unfix'd Officers as the Evangelists were.

I know indeed, 'tis pretended that the Apostles before their Decease, did Constitute such Bishops with a general Superintendency over the Churches and their Presbyters within such a certain District. And this Pretence is founded on the supposition of the Apostle Paul's leaving Timothy Bishop of Ephesus, and of all the

the proconsular Asia, and leaving Titus Bishop of Crete.

But this pretence is so far from being founded on the account given us in the Holy Scriptures, that the contrary seems manifest from thence. That Timothy was no such fixed Bishop as is pretended, will appear to any that from Scripture-History traces the Account of his Travells, of which this is a short Abstract. When Paul went from Berea to Athens he left Silas and Timothy behind him, Acts 17. 14. Afterwards They coming to Paul at Athens, Paul sends Timothy to Thessalonica to Confirm the Christians there, 1 Thess. 3. 2. Thence Timothy returns to Athens again, And Paul sent him and Silas thence into Macedonia, Acts 18. 5. Afterwards they Travel to Ephesus, and thence Paul sends Timothy again (with Erastus) into Macedonia, Acts 19. 22. And Paul himself went thither after them, Act. 20. 1. From Macedonia they with divers Brethren Journey'd to Asia, Act. 20. 4. and came to Miletus, whence Paul sent for the Elders of the Church of Ephesus, and committed the Care of that Church to Them, not to Timothy. On the contrary Paul took Timothy with

him in his Journey to *Jerusalem*, and so to *Rome*. For those Epistles which *Paul* Wrote when Prisoner there do mention *Timothy* as his *Companion*. As that to the *Ephesians*, *Collossians*, *Hebrews*, and *Philemon*. And for *Paul's* beseeching *Timothy* in his first Epistle, to abide still at *Ephesus*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 3. when he went into *Macedonia*, 'Tis so far from being any proof of his having fix'd him as the *Bishop of that Church* in the Modern Sense, that 'tis a solid Argument to the contrary : For he must have a very ill Opinion of *Timothy's Fidelity* and *Care*, had he plac'd him as a *fix'd Bishop* for term of *Life* there, if he thought him to need any such earnest entreaty to abide in a place that was his sole Charge and Care. And by the account I have already given it appears, That the Apostle very soon remov'd him from thence: Nor is there any Evidence in Scripture of his ever returning thither.

That *Titus* was no such *fix'd Bishop of Creet* is as manifest from the Scriptural Account of his Travels. He was *Paul's Companion* in his Journey to *Jerusalem*, Gal. 2. 1. *Paul* returning to *Antioch*, pass'd thro' *Syria* and *Cilicia*,

confirming the Churches, Acts 15. 41. From Cilicia he pass'd to Creet. Having there Preach'd the Gospel and Planted Churches, he left Titus for a while, to set in order the Things that were wanting, or left undone, &c. Tit. 1. 5. Paul the very next Year desire's him to come to him to Nicopolis, where he intended to Winter, Tit. 3. 12. But changing his purpose, he sends for him to Ephesus, where his Winter-Station was, Thence he sent him to Corinth, to enquire of the State of that Church. His return from thence Paul expected at Troas; and because his Expectation was not answer'd, was griev'd in Spirit, 2 Cor. 2. 13. Thence Paul pass'd into Macedonia, where Titus met him, and brought him glad Tidings what gracious Effects his Epistle to the Corinthians had produc'd, 2 Cor. 7. 6. 7. Paul having collected the Liberality of the Saints, sends Titus again to the Corinthians to prepare 'em for that Contribution, 2 Cor. 8. 6. After this we read that Titus was with Paul at Rome, and went thence, not to Creet (his supposed Diocess) but unto Dalmatia, 2 Tim 4. 10. And 'tis observeable, the most of

these *Travels* were after his being left in *Creet*; and we never read of his ever returning thither; and all agree that he staid but one Year there.

This *Evidence* is so clear, that it has extorted this *ingenuous* Confession from a late learned *Commentator*, "That if
 " by saying *Timothy* and *Titus* were Bi-
 " shops, the one of *Ephesus*, and the o-
 " ther of *Creet*, we understand that
 " they took upon 'em those Churches
 " or *Dioceses* as their fixed Charge and
 " Care in which they were to preside for
 " term of Life, he believes that *Timo-*
 " thy and *Titus* were not thus *Bishops*.
 See *Dr. Whitby's Preface to his Com-*
ment. on Titus.

3. There is no *Evidence* in the *Holy Scriptures* of the *Apostle's* having left any *Officers* superior to those *Scriptural Bi-*
shops I have describ'd, entrusted with the sole Power of *Church-Government* over some Scores or Hundreds of particu-
lar Churches, and with the sole Power of *Ordination* within that *Compass* and *District*.

For such a sole Power of *Church-Government* and *Ordination*, neither the *Apostles* nor *Evangelists* ever claim'd or
 ex-

exercis'd *themselves*, much less did they *delegate* it to any *others* as their *Successors* therein.

The *Apostles* were so far from claiming the *sole Power of Church-Government* themselves over the *Churches* they *Planted*; that they left the *Elders* or *Bishops* they constituted there, *entrusted with it*. Thus when the *Apostle Paul* at *Miletus*, sent for the *Elders of the Church of Ephesus*, he was so far from debarring them from the *Government* of it, and reserving it to *himself*, or to *Timothy*, or any other *superior Officer*, that he charge's *them* with the *Exercise* of it as their *important Duty*, and requires them to *Feed*, (i. e. to *Rule*) the *Church of God* over which the *Holy Ghost* had made 'em *Overseers*. And there are *two Circumstances* of his *Charge* very remarkable. The *one* is, that it was his *last Charge* to 'em, when he tells 'em, *He shou'd see their Faces no more*: So that if the *Apostle* had either claim'd the *sole Government* of that *Church*, or design'd to entrust any other *Superior* with it after his *Decease*, this was the proper *Season* of doing it. Nay if *Timothy* was at this time with him (as 'tis every way rea-

reasonable to believe by the forementioned Account of his Travels that he was) Nothing can be more unaccountable, if he design'd to leave him *entrusted* with this *sole Government*, than that he shou'd not take the least Notice of him, nor once require those *Elders* to be *Subject* to his *Authority* and *Jurisdiction*. The other Circumstance is, that the Apostle gives 'em this *Charge* upon the Prospect of their Dangers from *Seducers* and *Dividers*, and therefore supposes their *Government* and *Inspection* over this Flock the best remedy against *Schism*. See Acts 20. 29, 30.

And had the Apostle design'd to leave such *Diocesan Bishops* with such a *sole Jurisdiction* over *many Churches*, 'tis most unaccountable that he shou'd never in his *Epistles* to *Timothy* or *Titus* describe *their Office* and the *Extent* of it, and mention *their distinctive Characters*, but *confound* 'em with their *Elders* that are suppos'd to be their *Subjects*, and a *part of their Charge*.

And that the Apostle design'd not to subject these *Elders* of *Ephesus* to the *sole Government* of *Timothy* as a *part* of his *Charge*, may be justly inferr'd from
his

his Charge to them, in which he exhorts 'em to take heed to themselves (or to one another *ἑαυτοῖς*) as well as to the Flock of God, over which the Holy Ghost had made 'em Overseers (or Bishops.) So that they were here requir'd to exercise a mutual Inspection over each other's Behaviour and Conduct, that by fraternal Admonitions they might excite each other to fulfil the Ministry they had receiv'd from their common Lord, and might manage the common Affairs of the Flock committed to 'em, as much as possible, with common Consent and Concord. But sure there cou'd be no ground for such a Charge as this both relating to themselves and to their Flock, if they were intended for no higher Honour than merely to be another's Curates and Deputies by whom they were only entrusted with the care of Teaching that Flock, and Celebrating Divine Worship among 'em, while the sole Government both over them and their Flock was entirely reserv'd to a superior Officer, to whose Authority they were both to be perpetually Subjected.

And

And for the *Apostle Peter*, he was so far from claiming such a *sole Jurisdiction* over all the *Churches* he planted, or committing it to *others*, that he recommends the *Government and Inspection* of 'em to those *Elders* that were set over them, requiring them to feed the *Flock of God* among 'em, 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3, &c.

Nor did the *Apostles* either claim to themselves, or delegate to others, the *sole Power of Ordination*, to the Excluding these *Scriptural Elders* or *Bishops* from it. On the contrary, the *Presbytery*, either alone or in concurrence with the *Apostle Paul*, laid their *Hands* on *Timothy*. And the *Teachers* joyned with the *Prophets* of *Antioch* in laying theirs on *Barnabas* and *Saul* when sent on that special Service of *Preaching to the Gentiles*.

And if the *Apostles* Themselves claim'd no such *sole power of Government or Ordination*, with respect to the *Churches* they planted, nor delegated any such *sole power* to the *Evangelists*, or to any other *fixed Officers*, We are sure no others can claim it, nor have *Scriptural Bishops* any reason to abandon those *Rights* that belong to their Office, as *Ministers*

masters of Christ, and Inspectors of their particular Flocks, in compliance with any such *Unscriptural Claim*. And there is the more reason for their refusing *subjection* to such a *Claim*, when the *Engrossing* the *sole power* of *Church-Government* over *many Churches* into *one Hand* do's unavoidable occasion the woful *corruption* of all true *Discipline*. For if the *Pastor* of *one* numerous *Congregation*, how great-soever his *Abilities* are, do find the *Exercise* of such *Discipline* towards the *Members* of it, so *difficult* and *laborious* a *Task* as will take up all the *Time* and *Thoughts* he can spare from his other *Labours* (and I am confident, all that have seriously try'd it, will tell you this is really the *Case*) How shall we think *one Man* capable of doing that for some *Scores* or *Hundreds* of *Churches*, which the most *judicious* and *laborious* *Pastor* finds it hard enough to do *for one*? And those seem little to know or consider, What it is, that pretend to it.

I know indeed, That some *Superiority* of a *Bishop* over *Presbyters* begun early after the *Apostle's Days*; and did *Universally* diffuse it self thro' the *Christian*

stian Church. But 'tis a great Mistake to think that it was always *the same* that is *now* claim'd.

Bishops as *distinguish'd* from *Presbyters* were for some time no more than the *Senior Pastors* of a *single Congregation*, that claim'd only a *primacy of Order* in the *Council of Presbyters*, by whose common *Advice* all *Church Affairs* were manag'd. The *Bishops* of the *Churches* plant'd in great *Cities* first begun to extend their *Authority* over those *lesser Assemblies* which the *Increase* of *Converts* occasion'd the *Erection* of, as so many *Chappels of Ease* under the *Bishop's Church* as the *Mother Church*: So that our large *Parish Towns* with the: *Chappels of Ease* belonging to 'em, see in a true *Emblem* of their *small Diocesis*. But when the *Advancement* of *Constantine* to the *Imperial Power* increas'd the *Wealth* and *Dignity* of such *City Bishops*, and the *Ecclesiastical Government* came to be cast into the same *Model* with the *Civil*; especially when so many *Causes* were referr'd to the *Arbitration* of such *Bishops*, their *Authority* swell'd to a greater *Extent*; their *Dioceses* were gradually *Enlarg'd*; nay the

the *Dignity* of the *Cities* where they were plac'd, gave some of 'em a *Preheminence* above others, as *Metropolitans* above *Provincial Bishops*, and *Patriarchs* above them. Upon the division of the *Empire*, the *Bishop of Constantinople* claim'd the next place to *that of Rome*, (which had so long been the *Imperial City*) And this gave the rise to the *Papal Claim of Universal Supremacy*. But even this *superiority* of *Bishops* above *Presbyters* was never generally esteem'd as a *superiority of Order and Office*, and was ascrib'd to no higher *Original* than *human Constitution* by *Jerom*, *Austin*, *Chrysostom*, *Theodore*t, *Sedulius*, *Primatius*, *Ambrose*, &c. not to mention *elder Writers*.

And whatever might be said to justify the *Lawfulness* of such an *human Constitution*, if *Diocesan Bishops* did claim no other *Superintendency* and *Care* over the several *Churches* in their *Dioces*es, and over their *Elders & Bishops* than the *Apostles* and *Evangelists* did actually Exercise, and if they left these *Scriptural Bishops* in the possession of that *Power of governing their own Flocks* which the *Apostles* themselves invested

invested 'em in ; I say, whatever might be said from the practise of the *Apostles* and *Evangelists* to justify the *Lawfulness* of such an *human Constitution*, yet that *Plea* can never oblige us to submit to such *Diocesan Prelacy*, as turn's all the *Churches of a Diocess* into one govern'd Church, and by engrossing all Exercise of Discipline into one *Hand*, in so large a Precinct, both deprives *Scriptural Bishops* of an *Essential Branch* of their *Pastoral Authority*, and thereby also renders true *Church-Discipline* an *impracticable Thing*. (Not to mention the woful *Corruption* of it in the *Courts* that are now entrusted with the *Management* of it) Nor can we submit to that *Claim* of a *sole Power of Ordination*, which deprives *Scriptural Bishops* of their *Right*, especially our *Non-submission* to it is the more excusable, when such *Terms of Ministerial Communion* are impos'd, as wou'd exclude many from that sacred Office that are eminently *Qualify'd* for it. Nay when the acknowledgment of *Bishops*, as a *distinct Order* from *Priests* and *Deacons*, is one of the *Terms of Ministerial Communion* ; and that in such

Ex.

Expressions, as represent this to be evident from the Scriptures themselves, from which I have now endeavour'd (and I hope not without satisfying Evidence) to prove the contrary.

But for such a Superiority of Diocesan Bishops as will leave true Scriptural Bishops in the Possession of their undoubted Rights, and in the Exercise of that Power with which the Apostles themselves vested 'em, it appears how far those N. C. Ministers were willing for Peace sake to yield to it, who at the Treaty at the Savoy offer'd Archbishop Usher's own Model of the Reduction of Episcopacy, as the ground-work for an Accommodation of our Differences in this Point. And for those whom no less will satisfy than the sole Power of Government and Ordination over so many Churches as a Diocess usually consists of; we think our selves very excusable, that we dare not put down the necessary Government of so many true Scriptural Bishops, to advance the unnecessary Grandure of one Unscriptural One. And we have the more reason to reject this Claim of a sole Power of Government over so many Churches, and a sole Power of Ordination,

tion, when so many of those who of late plead for it, carry the Matter so high, as to declare the *Ministry* of all the *Reformed Churches* that want the *Authority* and *Ordination* of such *Diocesans*, as *Null and Void*, and all the *Sacraments* administred by the *Pastors* of such *Churches Invalid*; and tell us, *Their Flocks are left to the Uncovenanted Mercy of God*. These *Principles* are not only void of *Truth*, but of *Charity*, and the *Refutation* of 'em is highly necessary to lay the *Foundation* of an happy *Concord* among the *Reformed Churches*.

Having thus consider'd what the *Office of a Bishop* is; I now proceed,

II. To shew, That 'tis a good (or *Excellent*) *Work*.

And here.

First, We must consider it as a *Work* that requires the most laborious *Diligence* in the performance of it.

A *Christian Bishop* must be no *Loyterer*, but a painful *Labourer* in the *Vineyard of the Lord*. And accordingly his *Employment* is compar'd to those that require the greatest *Industry* and *Care*. He is an *Husbandman*, that must with
in-

incessant Toyl sow the Heavenly Seed,
and cultivate that *Field* of the Church,
which is *God's Husbandry*. He is a
Builder, that must with unwearied Pains,
both lay the *Foundation* of many a *Spi-*
ritual Temple to God, and carry on the
Superstructure. He is a *Leader*
in the *Army of Christ*, who ^{ἡγούμενος}
must be continually at Prizes with the
Enemies of his Kingdom, who must
endure all the Hardships and Difficulties
of that holy Warfare, and must endea-
vour with all Vigilance and Care, both
to save himself, and them that hear him,
1 Tim. 4. ult.

And truly when we consider, How
Great and *Extensive*, how *Difficult* and
Laborious our *Work* is, we may soon
perceive, 'tis enough, not only to take
up all our *Thoughts* and *Time*, but to re-
quire the utmost Intenseness and Appli-
cation of all our Powers. A *Christian*
Bishop has much to do in his own Closet,
and his secret *Retirements*; partly by
Reading and *Meditation* to lay in and
increase such a stock of Divine Know-
ledge, as may enrich his Mind and ena-
ble him as a ready *Scribe* for the *King-*
dom of Heaven, to bring forth out of his

444 *The Office of a*

sure things New and Old, and those suited to the various Cases and Emergencies of his People. And I need not tell you (my Brethren) what a vast and boundless Field Divinity in its due Extent is, to those that would be thoroughly skill'd in the Word of Righteousness, and able Workmen, that need not be ashamed, capable to divide aright the Word of Truth, and give every one their Portion in its due Season. Partly also, That he may by serious and deep Premeditation come duly prepar'd for all those publick Solemnities, in which he must be the Mouth of his People to God, or the Mouth of God to them: For the Preacher should (as the Wise-man speaks) seek to find out acceptable Words, Eccl. 12. 10. Not such as will tickle the Ears of his People with empty strains of frothy Wit, but Words of Authority and Weight, of Warmth and Fervour, proper to pierce the Consciences of his Hearers, and to excite and raise their devout Affections. A Christian Bishop must be often in his Pulpit, dispensing all the Institutions of Christ to his Flock, Preaching the Word in Season and out of Season. He must give himself to the Word and Prayer.
And

And as all his *Ministrations* must be the product of serious *Preparation*, so they must be perform'd with that *Accuracy* and *Judgment*, that *Vigour* and *Zeal*, that *Life* and *Fervour* of true Devotion, that may make and leave deep Impressions on the Hearts of all that attend'em. A *Christian Bishop* must be often with his *People*, that he may be well acquainted with the State of their Souls, and may apply himself to every one with suitable *Admonitions* and *Counsels*. And here to visit the Sick, and farther 'em in their Preparations for a near Eternity; to warn the Secure; to admonish the Careless; to comfort the Sorrowful and Dejected; to encourage the Serious; to resolve the Doubting; to recover the Back-sliding; to compose differences among contending Parties; is a *Work* that few understand the *Difficulty* and the *Toyl* of, but those that have try'd it. And to manage all these several Duties aright, will require that *Sagacity* and *Prudence*, that *Humility* and *Meekness*, that *Patience* and *Self-denial* which greatly increase the *Difficulty* of the *Work*. Nay a *Christian Bishop* must be often with his *Brethren*, that by joining his

Counsels and Endeavours with theirs, he may be serviceable to promote the common Concerns of Religion, and the valuable Interests of *Truth and Holiness, of Concord and Love.* But above all, a *Christian Bishop* must converse much *with God, and with his own Soul*, that he may excite those *Graces* that shou'd animate and run thro' all his Holy Ministrations, that he may perform every part of his pastoral Duty with a single regard to the Glory of *God*, and that *Fidelity and Tenderness* to the Souls of *Men*, that may commend him to the All-seeing *Eye of God*, and as far as possible to the *Consciences of Men.* And O what vigilant Inspection over our own Hearts, and constant attention to the inward Motions thereof, will all this require?

And sure my Brethren, the great *Importance* and *Moment* of our Work calls for all this unwearied *Industry.* For we must not *do the Work of the Lord negligently.* The *Vigour* of our Souls and *Strength* of our Bodies must be spent in it. It must be *done with all our Might.* And those are little acquainted with this *Sacred Office*, that do
not

not take it for a most *laborious Work*, or propose to themselves a Life of sensual *Ease* and *Sloth* in the Discharge of it. But,

Secondly, we must consider it as a *good Work* [*καλὸν ἔργον*]

And when the Apostle calls it a *good Work*, or an *excellent One*, he seems to intimate, both the *Beneficialness* of it to *others*, and it's being *honourable* to *those* that discharge it aright.

I. 'Tis a *good* (or *excellent*) *Work*, as that implies it's being highly *beneficial to others*.

And truly if we may measure the *Goodness* of any *Work* by its conduciveness to the *Glory of God* and the *Good of Others*, I know none comparable to this. Who can be employ'd in the Prosecution of more valuable and useful Designs than a faithful Minister of Christ is? He carries on no lower Aims than the Advancing the Honour of God in the Salvation of precious Immortal Souls. What is a *Christian Bishop's Work*, but to diffuse saving Light to Miserable Souls that *sit in the Region and Shadow of Death*? To quicken those to spiritual Life that are now *Dead in*

Trespases and Sins? To bring those in to a blessed Union to the Son of God, who are now *without Christ*, and consequently *without Hope in the World?* To persuade those to *accept* of his offer'd *Salvation* that infinitely *need* it, and to *form* him in those Hearts in which the Body of Sin Reign'd before? To Reconcile those to the Nature and Laws of God, who are now possess'd with wretched Enmity against him? And to recover his amiable Image where 'tis now defac'd? To *beget* those to a living hope of the *Incorruptible heavenly Inheritance*, who are now *strangers to the Covenants of Promise?* To carry on sincere Converts to higher degrees of Divine Knowledge, and to more eminent attainments in *Grace and Holiness?* To recover declining Souls from their Spiritual Backslidings and Decays, To arm and fortify endanger'd Souls against the assaults of the Tempter, and the violence and force of his Temptations? To assist and encourage the Faithful Soldiers of Christ in their *spiritual Warfare*, in order to their happy Conquest over all their spiritual Enemies? In a Word, To promote their fruitfulness in every good

good Word and Work here, and to train 'em up for the perfection and glory of the heavenly State, when Christ will *present to himself a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, holy and unblemish'd?* Ep. 5. 27. And my Brethren, can any *Design* be more serviceable to the Advancement of the Kingdom and Glory of God, or more Compassionate and more Beneficial to the Souls of Men than this? How truly may it be said of a laborious *Christian Bishop*, as it was once said of the great *Bishop of Souls*, *That he goes about doing good?* Acts 10. 38. Who can possibly be Imploy'd in more *excellent Service* than This? Who can be Instrumental in promoting more *Godlike Designs?* Who can expect to see more happy *Fruit* of their *Labours?* If the Salvation of *one Soul* be worth all the Labour of a Man's Life, How much more is it so to be the successful Instrument of *adding many to the Church of Christ of such as shall be finally sav'd!* Besides a true *Christian Bishop* is serviceable to maintain the *honour* of Religion, by the faithful Exercise of sacred Discipline, and to provide for the continuance and propagation of it to succeeding Ages
by

by setting others apart for the same Office. But,

2. 'Tis a *Good* (or *Excellent*) *Work*, as that implies its being *honourable to themselves*.

'Tis a *commendable Work* that renders those that are faithful and diligent in it, truly *amiable* and worthy of Esteem. And no wonder when 'tis (as I have shewn) so highly *useful* and *beneficial*. And accordingly, The Holy Scriptures dignify a *Christian Bishop* with those *Titles* that bespeak the *Dignity* of his *Office*. He is an *Embassadour of Christ*, sent on the most honourable *Embassy* of *Reconciliation* and *Peace*; And we know that all *Embassadours* are to be treated with a *Respect* suitable to the greatness of the *Prince* whom they *Represent*. They are *Stewards in the House of God*, And we know what an honourable *Post* that is in the *Courts* of *Earthly Potentates*. They are *Ministers & Servants of the most high God*, whose special *Relation* to him & nearness of *Access*, do's render their *Character Sacred* and *Venerable*. They are *Angels of the Churches*, whose *Time* is divided between those two *Excellent Works*

Works, the beholding the Face of their Father in Heaven, and the Ministering to the Heirs of Salvation here below. They are Stars in the Right-Hand of Christ; who therefore shine with a bright Lustre in that more Elevated Orb in which he has plac'd 'em : They are Buttresses and Pillars in the House of God; and therefore Ornamental as well as Useful to that sacred Building. Their Employment is truly Noble, and such as Holy Angels Themselves wou'd think it no Dishonour to be Engag'd in, who reckon Themselves the Prophets fellow-Servants, Rev. 22. 9. We are indeed but Earthen Vessels; but 'tis a precious Treasure that's Lodg'd and deposited in us, and which renders us Vessels of Honour in the House of God. 'Tis indeed a Dignity that the best of us have reason with the Apostle to account our selves unworthy of, and to admire the Condescension and Grace of God in committing so Excellent a Ministry to us. And as our Work it self is Honourable, so the Reward of it will be eminently Glorious. If we now turn many to Righteousness, we shall e'er-long shine as Stars in the Firmament Above, Even as Stars
or

of the first Magnitude there, Dan. 12. 1.
 The Reward of a Prophet is represented
 as exceeding great, and far beyond that
 of a Righteous Man (meerly consider'd
 as such) Mat. 10. 2 last Verses. 'Tis a
 bright and unfading Crown of Glory,
 which the chief Shepherd shall at his co-
 ming place on the Head of all those in-
 feriour Pastors that have faithfully fed the
 Flock of God among 'em, 1 Pet. 5. 4.

Thus you see that the Office of a Bi-
 shop is an Excellent Work, both as that
 it implies its being highly Beneficial to
 others, and truly Honourable to himself.

It now remains,

Lastly, That I make some Reflections
 on the foregoing Discourse, by way of
 practical Application.

Do's he that desires the Office of a Bi-
 shop, desire a good Work? Then,

I wou'd hence apply myself to such
 as are Enttring upon, or actually Invested
 in it.

I. For such as are Enttring upon it,
 They may hence see with what sincerity
 of Intentions they shou'd aspire to this
 sacred Office.

Alas

Alas! If either secular Pomp or Grandure, or great Revenues and Wealth, or human Applause, or any such low Considerations as these, be the chief Motives we have in our Eye; 'tis not the Office of a Bishop that we aspire unto; our Ambition is but Carnal and Irregular. If therefore we wou'd seek it with a commendable Ambition, we must take a right View of it; we must consider it as a painful and difficult Work, wherein we must renounce our carnal Ease, and spend our Strength and Life in continual Labours and Cares. We must expect manifold Difficulties and Discouragements in it, and come to it with a considerable stock of holy Resolution and Courage, Patience and Self-denial. 'Tis therefore an ardent desire of Advancing the Kingdom and Glory of God; 'tis a vehement Thirst for the Salvation of precious Souls; 'tis a fervent Love to the great Saviour and lover of Souls, that must be the Springs of our Ambition. And 'tis the Applause and Praise of God we must Aspire unto; 'tis his glorious Rewards we must have in our Eye. And if we are indeed influenced by such Considerations

rations as these; then is our *Ambition Regular and Commendable*. Then are our Desires of this *Holy Function* (supposing we are duly *qualify'd* for it, and *call'd* to it) such as God will graciously accept. Then may we expect his *Favour and Countenance*, his *Presence and Assistance* in that excellent Work, when so excellent *Motives* as these incline us to *Engage* in it.

II. For *those of us that are vested in this Office*, here is something suggested to *Excite us to our Duty*, and something to *Encourage us in it*.

i. Here is something suggested to *Excite us to our Duty*.

'Tis a *Work* we are Engag'd in, that calls for our utmost *Diligence and Care*.

And truly my Brethren, when we view our *Work* in the vast *Extent* of it; when we consider that *Variety* of *Duties* we owe to the *Flocks* committed to our Care; when we consider our own manifold *Infirmities* of *Body and Mind*; when we ponder the great *Importance and Moment* of our *Work*; and the greater *Consequences and Issues* that Depend upon it; when we think, what 'tis to watch over precious Souls, as those that
must

must give an account of 'em, O what reason have we to cry out with the Blessed Apostle Paul, *Who is sufficient for these things?* What need have we to implore Divine Assistance and Strength with the most ardent Prayers, as sensible, that *all our Sufficiency is of God?* And with what intenseness of Mind, with what vigour of Affection shou'd we apply our selves to the Discharge of our Office? With how unwearied Endeavours shou'd we prosecute the Great and Important Ends of it? We shou'd spare no Pains, no Vigilance and Care, that we may fulfil the Ministry we have receiv'd of the Lord, and may approve our Fidelity to his Eye. We have need to bestir our selves, when our *Work* is so Great, and our *Time* is so short, and our *Account* is so certain and near. 'Tis no easy matter so to feed the Flock of God, as to keep our selves pure from the Blood of all under our Inspection and Care. We have Work enough for all our Powers, for our *Heads* and our *Hearts*, for our *Strength* and our *Time*; we have the *Salvation of others* to work out, as well as our own; and indeed cannot expect to save our selves, if we do little considerable

derable towards *the saving of them*. O let us then dread to be found *Loyterers* in the Vineyard of the Lord. Let us not mistake our *Bishoprick* for a *sine-cure*. Let us reckon our selves sent to labour in that Vineyard, in which the greater *Harvest of Souls* we bring in, our *Account* will be so much the more comfortable.

To that End, let us consider.

'Tis this holy Diligence in the Duties of our Pastoral Office, that we have solemnly *promis'd* and *vow'd* at our *Ordination* to it. To this special Service of our Lord we have devoted our *Life* and our *Time*, our *Abilities* and *Gifts*, our *Strength* and *Vigour*. And we cannot fail of this Industry without being false to our sacred Engagements.

'Tis the *Work of God*, and therefore calls for our utmost Industry.

'Tis that Work wherein we are *Co-workers with him*.

'Tis the great Designs of our Blessed Saviour that we are called to carry on.

'Tis the Interests of his *Kingdom* we are concern'd to advance.

'Tis his *belov'd Flock* we are to feed.

'Tis the *Salvation* of those Souls that he has purchased with his own Blood that

that we are to Pray and Study and Labour for.

And *the Eye of the Great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls is continually upon us.* He observes our *Negligence or Industry, our Indifferency or our Zeal*, in all the Duties of our holy Function. He will measure the sincerity of all that Love we profess to him by our affectionate Care *in feeding his Sheep and his Lambs*, John 21, 15, &c. To him we must be accountable for the Souls committed to our Charge; and at our Hands will their Blood be required, if they perish thro' our treacherous Neglect. And the Blood of neglected Souls is Blood of the deepest Dye. Whereas he observes and will accept and reward our holy Diligence whatever our Success may be. And *happy will those Servants be, whom our Lord when he comes shall find so doing*, Luke 12. 43.

2. Here is something suggested to Encourage all faithful *Bishops or Pastors* in the Execution of their Office.

'Tis a good *Work* we are employ'd in, highly *beneficial to others*, and *honourable to our selves*. We must (my Brethren) expect manifold Discourage-

ments in the discharge of our Office, and accordingly fortify and fore-arm our selves against 'em. And here we have *Considerations* every way capable to *Outweigh* 'em. 'Tis true indeed, our *Work* will be *Painful* and *Laborious*. But we cannot spend our Life and Strength in more *excellent Service* than this. 'Tis *Work* whose *beneficial tendency* shou'd render it highly *Pleasing* and *Delightful*. We may look back upon our *Fidelity* and *Diligence*, and especially upon our *prosperous Success* in it with unspeakable *Satisfaction*. Our own *unsuccessfulness* is indeed our greatest *Discouragement*. But when God makes us the happy *Instrument* of bringing home many *Souls* to him, When we can discern numerous *Converts* that we may hope will appear to be our *Crown* and *Joy* at the *Great Day* of our *Lord's coming*, How will this animate us in our *Work*? How will it sweeten the remembrance of all our *Toyls* and *Cares*? How will it *make amends* for all our *Hardships* and *Trials*? This is a *Work* that we shall never have any *Temptation* to repent of, unless it be that we have been too *Negligent* in it. And whereas, our *Profession* may appear *contemptible* in the *Eyes* of the Men of

of this World, and may expose us to their Flouts and Scorn; we have enough here to ballance that slight Temptation. Our *Work* is *Excellent* and *Honourable* in *God's account*. Our *Fidelity* and *Diligence* in it will entitle us to *his* *Ap- probation* and *Praise*. Nay, our *Office* will recommend us to the *Esteem* and *Veneration* of all *wise* and *good* Men. And sure *God's* applause and *their's* (who alone are fit Judges of true Worth and Honour) will infinitely Countervail the Contempt wherewith *blinded* *World- lings*, or *Profane* and *Athetstical* *Scof- fers* may treat our *sacred Function*. No wonder that they despise *us*, who un- dervalue their *own Souls*, and make light of *Heaven* and *Salvation*! No wonder that they who slight the *Son of God* himself, shou'd slight his *Ambassadors* that come in his Name. But,

II. I wou'd hence Apply my self to those of you that are under the Inspec- tion and Care of such *Scriptural Bi- shops*.

And to such I wou'd only from hence recommend these two Duties.

I. *Esteem* such highly for the sake of that good *Work* they are employ'd in.

Beware of the common Guilt of this irreligious Age, viz. The treating this holy *Profession* with *Contempt*. Nothing can be a greater Argument of *Prophaneness* than this. 'Tis a manifest affront offer'd to the Blessed God, to despise those that *serve at his Altar*. Indignities offer'd to *Embassadors*, do always reflect on the *Prince* that Employs 'em, and are accordingly Repented as if offer'd to himself. And so our Lord tells us, are the *Indignities* offer'd to his *Messengers*. Those are awful Words, and deserve the serious Consideration of such irreligious Persons, *he that despises you* (saith our Lord, Luke 10. 16. v.) *despises me, and he that despises me, despises him that sent me*. To think that being the *Overseer* and *Guide of a Christian Flock* lessens a Man's Character, and is sufficient to represent him as *despicable*, is only to betray your own stupid Ignorance of what is truly *excellent* and *honourable*. 'Tis to estimate the value of things by *Sense*, and not by *Divine Faith*; and to judge of the *Respect* due to *Persons*, rather by the *empty Figure* they make in this World, than by that which they are like to make

before

before God, Angels and Men, in the World to come.

But, my Brethren, *I hope better Things of you.* And 'tis from you we expect other *Treatment and Usage.* And indeed, the *Relation* between a *Christian Bishop* and his *Flock* ought to be mutually *Endearing.* If we are truly what our *Office* obliges us to, we can say in sincerity, *That we long for you all in the Bowels of Christ, That we Travel in Birth over you till Christ be formed in you ; That we are willing to impart unto you, not only the Gospel of God, but even our own Souls also.* And sure we may justly Claim some reciprocal *Affection* on your part. Our incessant Labours and Cares may challenge some share in your Esteem and Love. And 'tis indeed highly requisite to the success of our Labours. 'Tis our Interest in your Affections and Veneration that must give all our Instructions and Coancils our Admonitions and Reproofs their just *Weight and Authority* with you. Even a young *Timothy* must not be despised on that Account. 1 Tim. 4. 12. Nay your Regard to the *Dignity* of our *Office* must both render you tender of the just Reputation of faith-

ful Ministers, and ready to overlook those common infirmities and Frailties, which they being *Men of like Passions with others* are subject to. You must value the *heavenly Treasure* tho' it be but in *Earthen Vessels*. You must be ready to cover their involuntary lamented Failures with a *Mantle of Love*, as considering that they are not *Angels* but *Men*. But their Office it self shou'd be truly *Venerable* in your Eye. And their conscientious Fidelity and Diligence therein do's justly entitle 'em to the affectionate Respect of all those for whose Souls they watch with so tender and laborious a Care.

2. *Contribute your best Endeavours to the Success of that good Work that your Christian Bishops are employ'd in.*

And truly my Brethren this is the best *Encouragement* you can give us. Did you bring a *teachable Mind* to our holy Instructions, and an *obedient tractable Heart* to our Persuasions and Counsels? cou'd we see the *Work of God* prospering in our Hands, and carry'd on with Success in your Hearts! O how wou'd it revive and animate us in all our holy Ministrations! Cou'd we see many Souls retur-

Returning to the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls ? cou'd we behold many made a willing People to Christ in the Day of his Power, and Converts as numerous as the Drops of Dew from the Womb of the Morning ? cou'd we observe you entertaining the Word of God with Reverence and Affection, attending on all his Institutions with Diligence and Ardent Devotion ? cou'd we behold our Churches walking in the Fear of the Lord, and thereby Edify'd and Multiply'd ? cou'd we discern greater Success and Fruit of our Labours in feeding the Sheep, and even the Lambs of Christ, O how wou'd this strengthen our Hands, and Encourage our Hearts in our excellent Work ! And to excite you hereto ;

Consider, that 'tis your own Eternal Interest and Salvation that all our Labours are bent to promote. And when others are so solicitous to farther your Salvation, Will you be careless and negligent of your own ?

Nay consider, that as we are accountable for our Diligence in our Office, so will you for the spiritual Advantages you enjoy under our pastoral Inspection and Conduct. And if you perish notwith-

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standing all our Fidelity, your Blood will be required at your own Hands. O do not then force us to give up our Account of any of you with Sighs and Groans for the unsuccessfulness of our Labours, instead of Joy and Triumph in the happy Fruits of 'em. See Heb. 13. 17.

I shall only add, that you shou'd farther the Excellent Work we are employ'd in, by giving all needful Encouragement thereto according to your Ability. And you have a remarkable Promise to excite you to it, delivered by our Lord himself, that he who receives (or entertains) a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, shall receive a Prophet's Reward. i. e. He that has contributed to the Encouragement and Success of his Labours, shall share in the Recompense of 'em.

Now may the God of Peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus the great Shepherd of the Sheep, thro' the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his Sight, thro' Jesus Christ; To whom be Glory forever and ever, Amen. Heb. 13. 20, 21.

FINIS.

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APPENDIX

To the

SERMON.

SINCE the Printing this *Discourse*, concerning the *Office* of a *Scriptural Bishop*, I occasionally cast my Eye on some late *Pamphlets*, Published under the Title of *Censura Temporum*. The *Author* pretends to consider impartially the good or ill *Tendency* of *Books*, *Sermons*, &c. But 'tis easy to foresee what kind of *Impartiality* is to be expected from Him; As to *Books* that relate to our *Civil Constitution*, He recommends to us not only *Dr. Hicks's Jovian*, which so plainly countenances all the arbitrary *Proceedings* of the late *Reigns*, but *Mr. Leslie's Cassandra* that is directly level'd against the late *Revolution*, (which he expressly makes to be the same thing with *Rebellion*) and consequently against the present *Government* that is *Established* there.

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And therefore I the less wondred
that in reference to our *Ecclesiastical Con-
stitution*, he shou'd Celebrate those late *Au-
thors* who have not only asserted the *Divine
Right of Diocesan Episcopacy*, but have con-
fin'd the *Catholic Church* within the bounds
of what they call the *Episcopal Communion*.
How different these Sentiments are from
those of our first Reformers in King Henry the
Eighth, King Edward the Sixth, and Queen
Elizabeth's Reign, Mr. Humphreys has suf-
ficiently prov'd in his *Healing Attempt*,
(wrote in Defence of Archbishop Usher's
Reduction of Episcopacy.) How little Foun-
dation they have in the H. Scriptures, I
have shown in the foregoing *Discourse*.
And since in his *Remarks* on the Book of a
late Author, Entitled, *The Divine Rights of
Episcopacy Asserted*, &c. (Prefac'd by Dr.
Hickes) he has given us the Strength of two
Arguments he insists on from the *New Te-
stament* to prove his *Assertion*, and seems to
think 'em *unanswerable*; I thought it not
improper to consider 'em in order to the
Confirmation of what I have offer'd in this
Discourse to prove, That a *Scriptural Bishop
and Elder* are the same in Office, as well as
Name.

His first Argument from *Acts 20. 28.* runs
thus. " Either these *Elders* of the Church
" (viz. of *Ephesus*) which St. Paul sum-
" mon'd, were properly *Bishops*; and then
" the *Divine Right of Episcopacy* is Plain
and

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" and Evident in Scripture; and we gain
" this over and above, that the *Metropolitani-*
" *cal* Power too was of Apostolical Ap-
" pointment. For if those *Elders* of the
" Church were *Bishops*, *Timothy* by that
" Power *St. Paul* requires him to Exercise
" over 'em, cou'd have been no less than
" their *Metropolitan*. But if they were on-
" ly *Priests*, then that superior Character
" and Jurisdiction that *Timothy* was inve-
" sted with, and commanded to make a good
" Use of, cou'd be no less than *Episcopal*.
To the former part of this *Dilemma*, I
wou'd suggest the following Particulars by
way of Answer,

I. That the *Elders* summon'd by *St. Paul*
were properly *Bishops*, according to the Scrip-
tural Notion of 'em, (*viz.* Such as had one
of the *Flocks of God* committed to their O-
versight and Government) is evident from the
Text it self. And the *Divine Right* of such
an *Episcopacy* is freely own'd. But that they
were such as had each of 'em a great Num-
ber of *Flocks* or *Congregations* (together with
their *spiritual Guides*) making up one govern'd
Flock or *Diocesan Church*, as the *pastoral Charge*
of each of 'em, there is not the least Reason to
imagine; On the contrary, the Apostle sup-
poses one *Flock* (*viz.* The *Church of Ephesus*)
to be the Object of their joint Over-sight and
Care. Whereas had they been so many
Modern Bishops, he must have recommen-
ded to 'em the Feeding the several distinct
Flocks,

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Flocks over which the H. Ghost had made 'em to many distinct Bishops or Overseers. Whereas it was one Flock which they had a joint-Relation to, which he requires 'em in common to Feed, and to take heed to one another in the doing of it aright.

Besides, The Apostle's great haste rendered it impossible to have so quickly summoned so many *Diocesan Bishops* of *Asia*, unless we suppose the most of 'em at that very time *Absent* from their Flocks, and residing in *Ephesus*; and if it were so, the Apostle ought in all reason to have given 'em a severe *Rebuke* for their thus leaving those Flocks, which they ought to have Fed, and for their sauntering in another Man's District, where their Work did not lye.

2. From hence we may see, That the Dream of *Timothy's* being a *Metropolitan* has no Foundation.

These Authors seem to have very fruitful Imaginations, who can first turn the *Elders* of the Church of *Ephesus* into so many *Diocesans* of *Asia*, and then set *Timothy* as their *Metropolitan* at the Head of 'em. But sure, they little consult his Honour in making him their *Metropolitan*, because if he was possessed of that high *Dignity* and *Charge*, he must himself have been as Scandalous a *Non-Resident* as the rest; since by the account I have given of his Travels, he so quickly left his *Metropolitan Church*, and

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and never that we read of return'd again to it. And on this *Supposition* the Apostle should have committed the *Feeding* and *Governing* this large *Metropolitan Church* to *Timothy*, not to the *Asian Bishops* that had only each of 'em a *Part* of it under their *Care*.

For the *other* part of the Dilemma, *viz.*
" That if the *Elders* of *Ephesus* were only
" *Priests*, then that superior Character and
" Jurisdiction *St. Timothy* was invested
" with, and commanded to make a good
" Use of over 'em, cou'd be no less than
" *Episcopal*. I Answer,

1. *Timothy's* superior Character was not that of a *Bishop*, (for then it had been common to him with these *Bishops* of *Ephesus*) but that of an *Evangelist*, whose Office it was to assist the Apostles in the Planting of Churches, the Constituting Elders and Bishops among 'em, (out of those Converts, whom they found best qualify'd with Knowledge and Abilities and Piety for that Office, See 2 Tim. 2. 2) And delivering to 'em the Rules that were necessary to their future Government. But when they had done this, they were far from claiming or engrossing for the future the perpetual and sole Government of those Churches which they had once settled. They knew that they were not to stay lo 'em, but to remove to some othering with the World where the Apostles nee parts of ded their

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Assistance to plant and settle other Churches? And for them to have reserved to themselves the *sole Government* of those Churches which they must leave so soon, and perhaps usually without any prospect of ever returning to 'em, wou'd have been not only *unreasonable*, but *wicked*. For unless we cou'd suppose 'em capable of exercising sacred Discipline at a Distance (without any personal Knowledge of particular Cases and Circumstances,) they must by thus reserving all Church Government to themselves, have rendered it *impracticable*, and destroyed the very Ends of that Power which they pretended to Engross. Or at least, they shou'd in their absence have constituted some others as their Deputy's to exercise this *diocesan Jurisdiction* in their Name.

2. We see on the contrary, that notwithstanding all the Authority of an Evangelist which (the Author tells us) St. Paul had invested Timothy with, and commanded him to make a good use of while he abode at Ephesus: This was so far from Entitling him to the *sole or perpetual Government* of the Church of Ephesus, and of these Elders or Bishops thereof, that after their Settlement by Timothy, the Apostle do's in his last Charge to 'em, when he expected to see 'em no more, commit the Flock of God among 'em, not to Timothy's Government, but to their's. Nay he do's not leave the Elders themselves to Timothy's or any other single

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single Person's perpetual Jurisdiction, but charges 'em to take heed to themselves, (or to one another.) And consequently he leaves all Ecclesiastical Affairs to their own concordant Management. And this Evidence against *Timothy's Diocesan Authority*, is the more cogent if we consider, that *Timothy* was in all probability present himself when the Apostle delivered this Charge to the Elders of *Ephesus*. And therefore the Apostle's entire Silence concerning *Timothy's Diocesan Jurisdiction*, and his leaving a Charge with these Elders so inconsistent with it, seems to me a clear Demonstration against it. Nay I may add, that whatever general Superintendency over many particular Churches, can derive the least Countenance from what *Timothy* and *Titus* are supposed to have done as *Evangelists* at *Ephesus* and *Crete*, can yet never be extended to overturn and put down the pastoral Government of the Elders or Bishops of particular Churches. Their Power must be supposed Cumulative, but not Destructive to that, as manifestly appears from this Instance before us.

3. I wou'd by the way take Notice of that Expression in this Dilemma. *If they* (saith the Author, speaking of these Elders of *Ephesus*) *were Priests, &c.* If by *Priests*, the Author means *Presbyters* or *Elders*, 'tis granted that these Rulers of the Church of *Ephesus* were Elders, with respect

to their *Age or Authority*, as well as *Bishops* with respect to their *Work and Office*. But if he take the Word *Priests* in the common sense it bears, (and as it answers the word *ἱερεῖς* in the New Testament) I understand not the Reason, why this *Author* and those of his Sentiments, shou'd be so fond of applying that *Name* to the Office of Scriptural *Elders* or *Bishops* that is never once us'd there; especially when it carries so dangerous a Sound. 'Tis no wonder indeed, that the Romish Church shou'd call those *Priests* whom she supposes to be impowered to offer up *Christ* daily in the *Mass* as a *Propitiatory Sacrifice*. But what have we *Protestants* to do with that *Name* who own no other *Propitiatory Sacrifice* but what was offer'd once for all; Nay who own no other proper *Priesthood* but that of *Christ*, who is said to have ἱερωσύνην ἀπαράκλητον, a *Priesthood* that cannot pass from one to another, and so admits of no *Successors* in it. (see Heb. 7. 24.) If it be said, that Scriptural *Elders* may be called *Priests* on the account of those *Spiritual Sacrifices* of Prayer and Praise which they offer up; 'tis easily answered, that this *Name* is common to 'em with all other *Christians*; they are all *Kings and Priests* Rev. 1. 6. They all make up one *Royal and holy Priesthood*, to offer up these *Spiritual Sacrifices*. 1 Pet. 2. 5. 9. And therefore this *Name* can be no way proper to distinguish these *Scriptural Elders* or *Bishops* from

from the *Flocks* or *Congregations* that joyn with 'em in these *Spiritual Oblations*. What peculiarly belongs to 'em is to be the *Guides* of those *Assemblies* in their publick *Devotions*. And I may here add, that that *Title* of the *Clergy* is as improperly chosen to *distinguish* these *Scriptural Elders* or *Ministers* from those they call the *Laiety*. For that *Title* is common to every *Christian Church*. Those *Churches* are God's *κληροί* his *Lots* or *Inheritances*, 1 Pet. 5. 3. And these *Scriptural Elders* that are requir'd to be their *Overseers* or *Bishops* are not to act as *Lords* over 'em, but to be bright *Exemplars* to 'em. But this I only occasionally suggest, because misapplied *Names* do often help to confound the true *Notions* of *Things*.

The other *Scriptural Argument* which the forementioned *Author* cry's up as an *invincible Proof* of the *Settlement* of an ordinary *Episcopacy* (he means a *Diocesan One*) in the *Times* of the *Apostles* is drawn, from "St. James's being consider'd by the *Apos-*
" *stles* while they were actually with him
" as *Bishop* of the whole *Body* of the
" *Church* of *Jerusalem* to whom apper-
" tained the *Throne* of it, as *Eusebius* ex-
" presses it. Which shews us plainly,
" that *Episcopacy* was a *distinguish'd Dig-*
" *nity* in the *Time* of the *Apostles*, and
" that they yielded the *Primacy* to him to
" whom the *See* of *Jerusalem* did belong.

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“ That one who was not of the *Twelve*,
“ shou’d have these Marks of extraordinary
“ respect pay’d him by the
“ *Twelve*, or by as many of ’em as were
“ there at that Time, which cou’d be
“ due to him only on the Score of a superior
“ Dignity and Authority in the
“ Place he then fill’d, is an uncontestable
“ Evidence that he held that Dignity and
“ Power by vertue of an ordinary and
“ settled Institution. For certainly the
“ extraordinary Commission the *Twelve*
“ had received, plac’d ’em in a Character
“ otherwise equal to his, if not much superior.
“ His nearness of Blood to our
“ Blessed Saviour very justly entituled
“ him to all the Expressions of a Deference
“ *personal* and *private*. But that *Relation*
“ neither invested him nor the *Sons of Ze-*
“ *badee*, nor the *Blessed Virgin* her self,
“ with any sort of *Authority*, that shou’d
“ challenge those Recognitions he received
“ from the Apostles themselves,
“ as bearing a Character at that Time,
“ and even in that Place Superior to them.
“ ’Tis true, the Eminence of his See might
“ set him in that Respect above all ordinary
“ Bishops whatsoever. But all the
“ Brightness of that must have yielded to
“ the Eminence of the Apostolical Character,
“ if it had not been for the Jurisdiction
“ that went along with it. His
“ being the first Ordinary Bishop wou’d
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“ by no means qualify him to take Place
“ of any of the extraordinary Ones. But
“ being an ordinary Bishop might very
“ well induce the extraordinary Ones to
“ treat him on that Occasion and in that
“ District as *superior* to them. Hence it
“ was at the end of the Consultation,
“ when he closes with his *Decretory Speech*,
“ he speaks to the whole Assembly in
“ such an *Authorative Style*, *Men and Bre-*
“ *thren hearken unto me.* v. 13. And *where-*
“ *fore my Sentence is,* v. 9. And hence it
“ was that *St. Paul* submitted himself to
“ give an Account to *St. James* in Council
“ (*Acts c. 21.*) of the Success of his Mi-
“ nistry among the Gentiles, and that they
“ lay’d that Express *Command* upon him,
“ *do therefore this that we say unto thee, &c.*
“ v. 23. And he so readily obey’d.

And the forecited *Author* is so elevated
with the imaginary Force of this Argument,
that he cannot forbear thus to insult upon
“ it, And now do not the unhappy Divi-
“ ders upon the Principle of Parity, ex-
“ pect *St. Paul* and the rest of the *Holy*
“ *Apostles* shou’d rile up in Judgment
“ against and condemn ’em for not sub-
“ mitting to the ordinary Government of
“ the Church: when behold they that did
“ constitute and frame it, submitted to
“ it?

I have in justice to the *Author* recited
this *Argument* at length; but shall con-

sent my self with a *short Answer* to it in the following Particulars.

Ans. 1. The whole Argument is founded on two meer *precarious, nay false Suppositions.*

The One is, that St. James here mention'd in this, Acts 15. and 21. was not one of the *Twelve* nor an *Apostle*. Whereas if this was James the Son of Alphaeus (as *Grotius* and other judicious Expositors think most probable) then he was one of the *Twelve* mention'd, Matth. 10. 3. Mark 3. 18. And if this be the St. James here spoken of, the whole Argument founded on the contrary Conjecture falls to the Ground.

But if we grant the St. James here mention'd to have been the Brother of our Lord, tho' he was not one of the *Twelve*, it do's not thence follow, that he had not both the Character and Authority of an *Apostle*. I am sure St. Paul reckon'd him among the *Apostles*, when he saith, at Gal. 1. 18, 19. *Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem, to see Peter and abode with him fifteen days, but other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's Brother.* How comes then our Author to degrade St. James from his *Apostolical* Dignity to make a *Diocesan Bishop* of him? And how ridiculous is the Comparison he here makes on this occasion between the Power of an *Apostle*, and that of an ordinary *Bishop* in his own *Diocels*?
and

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And wou'd he have us take that for an *Invincible Proof*, the Foundation of which is so palpable a *Mistake*?

But let us for once make a liberal Con-
cession to the *Author*, and allow that the
James here spoken of; was not one of the
Twelve, nor had the Character of an Apo-
stle at all. And then the Argument runs
upon another *Supposition* far more *Precarious*,
viz. That the *Apostles* here paid an extraor-
dinary Deference to him as Bishop of *Jerusa-*
lem; That they yielded the *Primacy* to him;
That they recognized his Character as in that
place Superior to their's; That they treated
him as Superior in his own District; That
they submitted to his ordinary Government.

I have read over the whole Chapter with
some Care, and to my great Disappoint-
ment cannot find one Syllable of all this.
All these *Suppositions* seem to have no other
Foundation than that of a warm Imagina-
tion.

Our *Author* here sets up for a *Spiritual*
Clarencieux, to determine the grand Point
of *Precedency* and *Superiority* between the
Apostles and this imaginary Bishop of *Jeru-*
salem within the bounds of his pretended
Diocese. But when he comes to prove
what he here supposes, all the *Evidence* he
produces amounts to no more than this,
That *St. James* speaks last, that he begins his
Speech with these Words, *Men and Bre-*
thren, Hearken to me; and *Concludes* 'em with

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these, *Wherefore my Sentence is, &c.* This he calls *speaking in an Authorative Style*. But I wou'd gladly know what Evidence it is of a Man's assuming an *Authority* over such a *Council* as this, That he begins his Speech in the common strain of all that crav'd Attention to what they had to say, even among such as they pretended no manner of *Authority* over? Do's not St. Stephen thus begin his Speech to the Jewish Council? Acts 7. 2. St. Peter to the Jewish Multitude? Acts 2. 14. So St. Paul, Acts 22. 1. Or what Evidence is it for a Man's assuming such an *Authority* and *Jurisdiction* for him in a Case that had been debated to conclude his Speech, *Wherefore I judge so or so; or, Wherefore this is my judgment.* For the Original is only *Διό οὕτω κέλευω*. As if St. James might not declare his own judgment in the Case without pretending to any *Authority* over the rest of the *Elders*, and much more without pretending to an *Authority* in that place superior to that of the *Apostles* themselves? And I wou'd gladly know, why any of the *Elders* themselves, or even any of the *Brethren* (that joyn'd with the *Apostles* and *Elders* in that Council, and in the Letter they wrote as the Result of their Consultation) might not have deliver'd their Opinion in the same Language that St. James do's his, without ever dreaming of any such *Authority* and *Jurisdiction* as this *Author* wou'd found upon it? Might not any

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any of 'em have bespoke the Attention of the rest with the same modest Preface, and after having offer'd so good Reasons have told 'em, *it was his Judgment*, that the Case ought to be so determin'd. And had they done so, wou'd it not have been ridiculous to draw such a *Conclusion* as this from it? shou'd the *Author* make such a *Speech* as a Member of the Convocation, wou'd he not think those very unreasonable that wou'd put such a perverse Construction upon it? Nay what tho' the *Apostles* and *Elders* and *Brethren* agreed to make use of several of St. *James's* Expressions, in the *Letter* they wrote, will any more follow from it, then that they approved his *Judgment* and the *Reasons* it was founded upon? And what can this signify to prove, that they recogniz'd in him an *Authority* superior to that of all the *Elders*, nay (as the *Author* vainly fancies) Superior in that District to the *Apostolical Authority* it self? Must every *Member* of a *Synod* or *Council*, whose Judgment is universally approv'd and follow'd, claim a *Primacy* and *Government* over all whose *Suffrages* accord with his? Nay is there the least shadow of probability, that the *Apostles* and *Elders* and *Brethren* concurr'd with St. *James*, rather out of regard to his *Superiority* and *Dignity* as the suppos'd *Diocesan* of that *See*, than out of regard to the convincing *Reasons* that he alledg'd? Of the former, there is not the

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last Intimation; The *later* is fairly suggested in their Letter, *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, &c.* So that there needs no other Account to be given of their concurring with the Judgment of *St. James*, than their being convinc'd by the Reasons he offered.

But for our *Author's* peculiar Fancy, that the *Apostles themselves* recogniz'd *St. James's* Authority as in his District superior to *their's*, I am afraid it will overturn all that Authority of *Metropolitans*, which he seems so desirous to countenance from the Example of *Timothy*. For I had always thought, that in our *Archiepiscopal Visitations*, the Authority of the *Archbishop* had during his *Visitation*, suspended the Exercise of that of the *Ordinary* of the Place, as superior to it, and capable to control it. But by this *Author's* Account, and way of Reasoning, the *Archiepiscopal* must yield to the *Episcopal* Authority within the bounds of the *Bishop's Diocese*; since he supposes, that the *Apostles* themselves when in *St. James's* *Diocese*, yielded him the *Primacy*, recogniz'd his superior Authority, and submitted to his Government. And if this be not a Ranversing all the pretended Order of the *Hierarchy*, I know not what is.

2. If there be any Force in this *Author's* reasoning, it all turns against himself.

Paul and *Barnabas* are sent to *Jerusalem*, for the decision of this Question (about the

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the Necessity of the Gentiles being Circumcised, and observing the Law of Moses, v. 2.) Upon their arrival there, They are receiv'd of the Church, and of the Apostles & Elders, v. 4. The Apostles and Elders came together to consider of this Matter, v. 6. The Apostles and Elders and whole Church or Brethren join in the Letter written to their Brethren in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, v. 23. Now if St. James was of the Council, he was either one of the Apostles or Elders, or Brethren. Our Author denies him to be one of the Twelve, or to be an Apostle at all. And to be sure he will not rank him among the Brethren. He then must either be one of the Elders, or else his Title and Dignity is quite left out, tho' the Author supposes his Authority to have chiefly decided the Question it self. And therefore shou'd I argue at the Author's rate, I might reason thus; That since St. James was one of the Elders, and yet since the Apostles themselves paid him such extraordinary Respect, as to Recognize him as Superior in his own District; therefore the Authority of Presbyters depends upon a jettled Institution, since the Apostles themselves submitted to the ordinary Government of Presbyters, and will rise up in Judgment against such as refuse the like Submission to it: So that this is a much stronger Argument for Presbyterial Government, than for Diocesan. And thus far the Argument is strong and clear, that the Apostles themselves

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elves admitted the Elders of the Church of Jerusalem, to give their Suffrages in this Council; and if St. James was not an Apostle, then his Vote as an Elder was in this important Affair as Decisive as that of any other Member of the Council.

I know, the Author will here tell us, that St. James was call'd the Bishop of Jerusalem, by Writers that liv'd in the succeeding Ages. But I must freely tell him, their Authority with me is no way comparable to that of St. Paul, who mentions him as one of the Apostles in the Place forecited, Gal. 1. 19. Nor to that of St. Luke, who was better acquainted with St. James's Character and Station than they cou'd be, and who here ranks him among either the Apostles or Elders, without the least mention of any Dignity or Office distinguish'd from those two. And indeed if St. James had been invested with such a distinct Office, it wou'd have been a very unaccountable Omission in the inspir'd Historian, to take no Notice of this bright Character, and eminent distinguish'd Dignity of his (to speak in the Author's strain.) If St. James was in the Modern Sense the Bishop of Jerusalem, How comes St. Luke to commit such a Blunder as to confound the Bishop with those Presbyters that were his Clergy and Subjects? It seems to be with a Design to avoid this Absurdity that Dr. Hammond makes these Elders to be so many Diocesan Bishops

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of Judea, St. James being their *Metropolitan*. But besides, that he makes St. Luke guilty of the same Fault in dropping St. James's distinguishing Title of *Metropolitan*, he never considers the absurdity of making all of 'em *Non-residents*. For Paul and Barnabas found 'em all together at Jerusalem, without any *Summons* sent to bring 'em thither, or any *Jewish Festival* that shou'd occasion their Congress. See Dr. *Whitby's* Paraphrase on *Acts* 15.

Besides, We may easily account for the *Ancient Writers* calling St. James Bishop of Jerusalem, because they suppos'd him constant *Præses* or *Moderator* of the Council of *Presbyters* there. And tho' there is no Evidence of this in the H. Scriptures, yet such a Concession will no way favour the *Diocesan* Cause. Such a *stated Presidency* for Order sake, in the (*Consessus Presbyterij*) Council of *Elders* in every Church was the *Episcopacy* that obtain'd, when the Characters of Bishop and Elders came first to be Distinguish'd, (as we freely own they were in *Ignatius's* Time, if the *Epistles* ascrib'd to him be genuine.) And a late Learned Antiquary Mr. *Basnage* in his *History of the Jews*, Dedicated to the present Bishop of Winchester, has offer'd an ingenious Conjecture, that this early *Presidency* of one as Bishop in the Bench of *Presbyters*, had its rise from the Management of the *Jewish Synagogues*. The Passage being remarkable,

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I shall recite it at length. 'Tis in Book 5
page. 408.

“ The Government of the Synagogues
“ (saith he) hath been often Chang'd. In
“ our Saviour's Time they were regulated
“ by a certain Number of Doctors. There
“ were one or two Persons set over these
“ Doctors. The *President* and *Vice-presi-*
“ *dent* were call'd the *Chiefs of the Synagogue*.
“ *Lightfoot* gives this Title to three Persons
“ who were set over Ten Leaders. 'Tis
“ also from thence that the Christian Church
“ has taken its Discipline. For in the be-
“ ginning of every Church, there was a
“ certain Number of *Priests* (or *Presbyters*)
“ order'd proportion'd to the Number of
“ Christians. When the Cities were large
“ as *Jerusalem* and *Rome*, they placed two
“ Bishops in 'em : But most of the Chri-
“ stian Churches had but *one Bishop*, as
“ most of the *Synagogues* had but one *Head*.
“ There was no other difference put be-
“ tween *Bishops* and *Priests* but that of *Pre-*
“ *sidency*, which was givento *Age* and *Me-*
“ *rit*. And therefore the Names of *Bishops*
“ and *Priests* are so often confounded in the
“ Gospel, as well as among the *Jews*. All
“ the Doctors that took care of the Syna-
“ gogue were of the same *Order*, and held
“ the same *Rank*. In following this Ori-
“ ginal of Discipline which is natural,
“ since the *Jews* which are jealous of their
“ Rites, laid the first Foundation and Pco-
“ pling

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pling of Churches; 'tis easy to take off
the Objections against *Episcopacy*, which
wou'd become Difficult, by following
other Principles.

Now for such a meer *honorary Presidency* of one of the same *Order* and *Rank* with the other *Presbyters* in every Church, tho' it do's not appear to be of *Divine Right*, yet it is so far from being the matter of the present Debate, that our great Complaint against the *Episcopacy* which the Author contends for, is, that the *Diocesans* have depriv'd these *senior Presbyters* or *Bishops* as well as their *Colleagues* in every particular Church of their *Pastoral Power* (which the Apostles themselves never did) and by monopolizing it to themselves, have occasioned the general Decay and woful Corruption of Christian Discipline. And if we shou'd suppose that the *Elders* of *Jerusalem* did allow such an *honorary Presidency* as this to *St. James*, it was either on the Account of his Character as an *Apostle*; or they might do so on the Account of his *Relation* to and *personal Converse* with our Blessed Lord: And this without supposing him to be of any distinct *Order* and *Office* from themselves. I am sure, for those whom our Author calls *Dividers on the Principle of Parity*, they offer'd at the *Savoy-Conference*, to yield to much more than this, in order to an *Accommodation*, even to that much higher Authority which

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Archbishop Usher's Model reserves to our *Bishops*, insisting only on their restoring the *Pastoral Power* of the true *Scriptural Bishops*. And indeed without the *Restoration* thereof, Men may make a loud Noise about *Church-Government* and *Discipline*; but the *Thing* it self can never be *Exercis'd* to any valuable Purpose when 'tis engross'd in so large a District into one Hand, or rather turn'd over to a *Lay-Chancellor* as the *Bishop's Deputy*. As Mr. *Baxter* has unanswerably prov'd in his *Treatise of Diocesan Episcopacy*.

3. Whereas the *Author* tells us, " That *St. Paul* submitted himself to give an Account to *St. James* in Council, *Acts* cap. 21. of the success of his Ministry among the Gentiles. And that they laid that express Command upon Him, *Do therefore this that we say unto Thee, &c.* And he so readily obey'd. I cannot upon the strictest perusal of the Passage, see any solid Foundation for these strange Inferences which the *Author* wou'd draw from it. For why might not *St. Paul* give *St. James* and the rest of the *Elders* of the Church at *Jerusalem*, an account of his success in the Conversion of the Gentiles, without supposing them to have any Authority over him? Or that by giving them such an Account he submitted to their Authority? The *Author* may as well suppose that He recogniz'd the Authority of the Brethren over him, to whom he made the same Narrative: Nay since

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Since the *Author* supposes *St. James* to be an *Apostle*, and that the *Elders* were in Council with him; Does he not strangely derogate from the Dignity of the *Apostolical* Character, by supposing an *Apostle* accountable to a Council of *Presbyters*, and their *Chairman* or *Moderator*, as his *Ecclesiastical Superiors*? Our *Author* sure little consider'd how extravagantly he exalts the Power of a *Presbytery* when he thus subjects an *Apostle* to its *superior Authority*. But whatever *Diocesan Bishops* may be, *Presbyters* are too modest to draw any such absurd *Inference* as this from the *Apostle's* Condescension and Brotherly Respect, in giving 'em this account of his Proceedings. He needed no other Motive to do that, than that he knew it wou'd be highly acceptable to 'em, to hear of that glorious Light of the Gospel being diffus'd to those Gentile Nations that before sat in the Region and Shadow of Death. And whereas our *Author* saith, " That *St. James* and the Council laid their *express Command* upon him; Now therefore do this that we say unto Thee, &c. And he so readily obey'd. I shou'd have thought that he wou'd have much better consulted both *St. Paul's* Credit and *Theirs*, by supposing those Words to be no more than a Friendly *Intreaty* or *Advice*, which the *Apostle* upon the reasons they offer'd freely comply'd with. I am sure the Expressions of the inspir'd *Historian* import no more than such

such a Brotherly Advice. And the Apostle Paul (who to the Jews became a Jew, that he might gain the Jews, 1 Cor. 9. 20.) may well be suppos'd ready to follow it. And therefore for our Author to suppose it an *Express Command*, as it lessens St. Paul's Character on the one hand; so on the other, it argues a strange Presumption in St. James and the Elders of Jerusalem to assume such a Dictatorship over an Apostle himself. But if we shou'd allow it to be a Command, it serves only to prove the stated Authority of a Presbiterary and their Chairman or Moderator; but by no means that of a Diocesan Bishop. And their Authority must be (as our Author argues) a settled Institution indeed, if an Apostle thought himself oblig'd to submit to it.

4. I wou'd seriously desire the Author to consider, how *aliene* his Language on this Subject is from the Simplicity and Humility of the Apostolical Age. The Apostles were indeed once infected with something of this ambitious humour, when their Minds were tinctured with carnal apprehensions of the Messiah's temporal Kingdom. They were then full of the question, *Who shou'd be greatest?* But after our Saviour had read 'em such a Lecture of Humility, and represented their Office to 'em as a Ministry, and not a Domination, Mar. 9. 33, 34, &c. Mar. 20. 26, &c. Luk. 22. 24, 25, &c. And especially after the H. Spirit had descended up

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upon 'em in its eminent *Graces* as well as extraordinary *Gifts*. We Read nothing of this Affectation of *pompous Titles* and a *Di-
tatorial Power*. And therefore this twel-
ling Language of our *Author*, concerning
St. James's Primacy, his *See and Throne*, his
Superiority in his own District, his *decretory
Speech*, his *Authoritative Style*, his *Commands*
to *St. Paul*, &c. savours muchmore of the
Vanity and Pride of the *succeeding Ages*, than
of the *Humility and Self-denial* of the truly
Primitive. And therefore I wou'd recom-
mend to the *Author's* Consideration, that
memorable Passage of the truly Judicious
Mr. Hales of Eaton. 'Tis in his *Traict of
Schism*, pag. 13. " But that other Head
" of Episcopall Ambition, (saith he) con-
" cerning Supremacy of Bishops in diverse
" Sees, one claiming Supremacy over ano-
" ther; as it hath been from time to time a
" great Trepass against the Churches Peace:
" So 'tis now the final Ruin of it. The *East*
" and *West* thro' the fury of the two Prime
" Bishops, being irremediably separated
" without all hope of Reconcilement. And
" besides all this Mischief, 'tis founded on
" a Vice contrary to all Christian Humi-
" lity, without which no Man shall see
" his Saviour. For They do but Abuse
" themselves and others that wou'd per-
" suade us, That Bishops by Christ's Insti-
" tution have any Superiority over other
" Men, farther than of *Reverence*; or
" that any Bishop is superior to another.

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" *far*

“ farther than positive Order agreed upon
“ among Christians, hath prescribed. For
“ we have believed him that hath told us
“ That in Jesus Christ there is neither High
“ nor Low; and that in giving Honours
“ every Man should be ready to prefer a-
“ nother before himself. Which saying
“ cuts off certainly all claim of Superiori-
“ ty, by title of Christianity, except Men
“ think that these things were spoken on-
“ ly to poor and private Men. Nature
“ and Religion agree in this, That nei-
“ ther of us have in Hand in this Heral-
“ dy of *Secundum sub & supra*. All this
“ comes from Composition and Agreement
“ of Men among themselves. Wherefore
“ this Abuse of Christianity to make it lac-
“ quey to Ambition, is a Vice for which,
“ I have no extraordinary Name or Igno-
“ miny: And an Ordinary I will not give,
“ lest you should take it a transcendent
“ Vice to be but trivial. And the Re-
“ mark that Doctor *Sallustius* makes on
“ his Pledge in curing it, is no less obler-
“ vable. *Seneca*, Part II, Cap. 8. Thus
“ that Grave and Wise Person (saith he)
“ whose Words favour of a more than or-
“ dinary tincture of a true Spirit of Chri-
“ stianity, that scorns to make Religion a
“ Footstool to Pride and Ambition. We
“ see plainly, he makes all Difference be-
“ tween Church Officers to arise from con-
“ sent of Parties, and not from any Di-
“ vine Law. Upon

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Upon the whole I wou'd advise the *Author* when he produces such *weak* and *inconclusive* Arguments, that are so easily turn'd against himself, to learn so much *Modesty*, as to talk in a lower Strain than that of *Invincible Proofs* and *Insontestable Evidence*. And I wou'd much more earnestly Advite him to greater *Charity* towards the *Reformed Churches* than to contract the *Catholick Church* within the Bounds of what he calls the *Episcopal Communion*. If that Principle be not grossly *Schismatical*, I know not what *Schism* means. Let the *Author* then remember, That it was *Diotrephes's* Crime, That as he Lov'd the preeminence, so he instead of *Receiving the Brethren*, forbad them that wou'd, and cast 'em out of the Church, III Epn. John 9, 10. v. Such *Uncharitable Excluders* of others, run the greatest hazard of being *Excluded themselves*, by the truly *Decretory Sentence* of the only *Universal Shepherd and Bishop of Souls*.

FINIS.